GRADUATE SCHOOL
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

8-2014

Driving and Thriving: School Bus Drivers and the Behavior Management Strategies They Use

Brian K. Sims
East Tennessee State University

Driving and Thriving: School Bus Drivers
and the Behavior Management Strategies They Use

_____

A dissertation
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

_____

by

Brian Keith Sims

August 2014

_____

Dr. Donald Good, Chair

Dr. Cecil Blankenship

Dr. Eric Glover

Dr. Pamela Scott

ABSTRACT

Driving and Thriving: School Bus Drivers
and the Behavior Management Strategies They Use

by

Brian Keith Sims

The purpose of this study was first to determine the satisfaction level of bus drivers pertaining to

school building administration, transportation department, and student behaviors, and second to

identify the common behavior management strategies used by bus driver in a particular school

system in east Tennessee. I also compared the common behavior management strategies used by

school bus drivers who are also employed by the school system in some position in addition to

this vocation with school bus drivers who are not employed by the school system other than

driving the school bus. I also compared behavior management strategies in the following

categories: age, years of experience, and gender.

For this quantitative element of the study, I requested bus drivers who met the criteria complete

an anonymous survey. The survey had 20 items that focus on the bus drivers' satisfaction in

areas of school building administration, transportation department, and student behavior. Bus

drivers responded to each item by selecting responses on a 5-point scale from extremely

dissatisfied to extremely satisfied, with neutral being the middle point. A single sample t-test

was conducted and the results showed bus drivers were satisfied to a significant extent with

school building administration and transportation department, while bus drivers were neither

satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior. Bus drivers also ranked their top five behavior

management strategies. Results were categorized by age, years of experience, gender, and

whether they were employed by the school system in another position. The overall top five

behavior management strategies by bus drivers were 1) Assigning a student to a particular seat,

2) Reporting students to school building administration, 3) Moving a student to a particular seat

during the bus route, 4) Use of video surveillance, and 5) Discussing a student's behavior with a

parent or guardian.

I also interviewed 10 school building administrators in the same school system for their

perspective on student behavior management strategies recommended for bus drivers to use on

school buses and also their perspective on the impact student behavior on a school bus has on a

student at school. Responses were also solicited from school building administrators of their

perspective of driver management practices that seem most and least conducive to managing

and preventing behaviors on buses. I recorded the responses given to these questions and listed

the responses along with any additional comments from administrators. Most of the responses

correspond with the responses bus drivers gave in their interviews. Half of the administrators

stated school buses should be operated like a classroom with rules and consequences.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the ones I try to put above myself daily, the ones who mean the most to me. I did not arrive at this destination without the support and love of a great family.

To my beautiful wife, Angela Sims, for your commitment and dedication of being selfless every day. You chose to submit to the highest calling - loving a family in every sense of the word. You have encouraged, pushed, and sacrificed because you believe in me. Thank you for showing what true love is and for being an example of Christ. Thank you for the lifesaver.

To my wonderful daughter, Brittany Sims, for your unique qualities and traits that resemble your cool dad (my little mini me). Thank you for being my helper through the years. Remember what we have taught you and stay on the path. Your time will come. To my awesome son, Nick Sims, for keeping me young and strong. You are a blessing to all of us with your innocence and exceptional personality. You challenge us to look beyond the outward and find the heart in all situations. Life is never boring.

And to my mother, Betty Sims, for bringing me into this world and raising me and loving me. I am not perfect but you tried to keep me on the straight path. We have come a long way. I know you have said you are proud of the man I have become and I want you to know that you and dad were and are good parents. So this is the paper. Don't fall asleep reading this!

I must add my mother-in-law, Hazel Marie or Nana. Thank you for so much through the years and especially during the hardest of times - you are a good mother to us. I told you I would finish it. Thank you for your faith in me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Melinda Dunlap, Kristy Wallen, Janet Johnson, Troy Kelley, Jim Moore, and Dr. John Robinette. They all had different personalities and leadership styles but they all had two things in common: the love for the students and the care for the family of educators.

I want to thank the Sevier County Transportation Department. Danny Ellis - thank you for allowing me to be part of your team of drivers and for your support. Jim Keener - thank you for your assistance when I asked you and your generosity. Thank you drivers for taking time to do what is right and safe even though it may be hard and difficult some days - I am proud to call you my colleagues. Thank you Jimmy and Cal and all of the mechanics who keep us going. I appreciate the cooperation this department has offered during this study and during the years.

Thank you Meridee Underwood for your support and care. I have been blessed to work with you every day. Thank you for Betsy Edmond and Ruth Copeland for your support, teamwork, and encouragement through the years. Thank you to the colleagues who do what it takes for the students to succeed. Thank you Donna, Becky, Jennifer, Magge, and Tamara.

I want to thank all members of the three cohorts I have been blessed to been part of during my three degrees from ETSU. I know we were like family and I wish each of you the best as you do what you are called to do for the students.

Thank you to the Sevierville Cohort in this Doctoral Program: Marti Cantrell, Mandy Cannon, Karen Kelley, Susan Laws, and Gale Collett. Each one of you is an inspiration. Thank you Geri Scalf for your encouragement - you will do this!

And thank you to my family who are too many to name but I will add my favorite brother Barry Sims and my favorite sister Karen Adams - Go BUCS! I am thankful to a family who encouraged and lifted me up in prayers as I traveled this road. This is finished!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On any school day school personnel begin their day before the students arrive. Cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers, and administrators usually start the school day with assigned duties to perform. These school personnel have duties at the school building and are typically in a sheltered space. There is a group of school personnel who begin their school day outside and their whole responsibility is outside of the school building: the bus drivers. Bus drivers have many responsibilities and their environment is unique in the school system. Bus drivers' primary responsibility is to keep the students safe and to drive the school bus safely under all types of conditions and circumstances. Bus drivers must have a combination of skills and traits to prove they are competent drivers. Bus drivers are responsible daily to conduct an inspection to ensure the mechanics of the school bus, e.g., brakes, lights, tires, steering, etc., are meeting the standards to drive and transport students safely (School bus drivers, 2000). Drivers may take on the roles of counselors, nurses, or tutors to students while operating school buses. They are accountable for students from all grades and schools at the same time. They oversee these students from a unique position of looking in the opposite direction. They are also liable for the long, yellow school bus and the operations of it.

Bus drivers have rules on the school bus to provide guidelines for the students to follow. When the students know and follow these rules, the operation of driving the school bus improves with fewer driver distractions, and the chances of a safe bus ride greatly increase (Rosen, 1997). In order for bus drivers to develop and implement these rules for a safe bus ride, they use

behavior management strategies that increase students' willingness to follow these rules and decreases students' inappropriate behaviors on the school bus.

Bus drivers begin their days earlier and are on the job later than most school personnel. For the students who ride the school bus, the bus driver is the first school personnel they see and interact with in the morning and the last school personnel they see and have interaction with in the afternoon (Dawson & Sanders, 1997). The bus driver can have an influence on each student on the bus, either positively or negatively. Douglas (1986) states one challenge for bus drivers is to arrive at schools with students "in a frame of mind conducive to learning" (p. 99).

Farmer (1975) makes a case for potential school bus drivers to meet certain criteria. One of the criteria a potential school bus driver is to be a "tactful disciplinarian" (p. 105). He discusses the success of a program of pupil transportation relays on the school bus driver than on any other factor. This suggestion leads him to list qualifications, both personal and legal, which any potential driver must obtain before employment. Farmer expands with the qualifications of a school bus driver by making sure the school bus driver has a description of the job responsibilities that must be met during employment. He states one job responsibility of a school bus driver is "the procedure to be followed in maintaining pupil discipline" (p. 107).

According to Farmer (1989) bus drivers are to be skilled at driving and that is a full-time job. Bus drivers need to focus entirely on driving the school bus. Like any other humans driving vehicles, bus drivers could err in their driving and be involved in an accident. Unfortunately not like most drivers, bus drivers may have students on the bus which would affect not only the school but also the community if an accident occurs. The advantage to all stakeholders is to be proactive in eliminating disruptions on the bus.

As in classrooms, student discipline is an important matter on school buses. Unlike classrooms, the authority is the bus drivers who face away from the students while driving in traffic, on roads that may have curves and obstacles, and with uncontrollable weather conditions. Bus drivers control thousands of pounds of glass, steel, and rubber with precious cargo of students onboard. Bus drivers are mindful that a single interruption of focusing on driving could produce an accident, possible injury, or the worst case scenario, death. To reduce interruptions by students, it is utmost important bus drivers use effective behavior management strategies at all time. (Button, 1984; Douglas, 1986)

A reason for bus drivers to have behavioral strategies is the reduction of bullying on school buses. Bullying, according to Fite et al., (2013), is most likely to occur "in large areas where fewer rules and constraints exist, the ratio of students to teachers is high, and adults are limited in their ability to monitor and provide supervision" (p. 587). School buses are a key location for bullying to occur. Bullying happens in all grades with increasing occurrences in the elementary grades, peaking in the middle school grades, and eventually decreasing in the high school grades. Bullying affects 18% of elementary grade students. During the Expect Respect Project students reported that bullying happened 39% on school buses.(Meraviglia, Becker, Rosenbluth, Sanchez, & Robertson, 2003) Bullying affects students not only on school buses but also in schools. Stephen Wessler, Director of the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence at the University of Southern Maine, states, "It's difficult to reset the climate at school to be welcoming for a student who has just spent 45 minutes being harassed" (as cited by Harrison, 2005, para. 8).

Statement of the Problem

Over 440,000 school bus drivers transport over 26 million students daily (School transportation safety data, 2012). With school bus drivers transporting so many students at one time, bus drivers use strategies to keep the students from being disruptive. The strategies used on the bus vary depending on the students and the bus driver (Farmer, 1989). The purpose of this study was first to determine the satisfaction level of bus drivers pertaining to school building administration, transportation department, and student behaviors and second to identify the common behavior management strategies used by school bus drivers in a particular school system in east Tennessee. I compared the results based upon gender, age, and years of service. I also compared the common behavior management strategies used by school bus drivers who are also employed by the school system in some capacity in addition to this vocation, in particular in a school building, with school bus drivers who are not employed by the school system other than driving the school bus. I also interviewed school building administrators who have working relationships with bus drivers in this same particular east Tennessee school system. I sought to determine what common behavior management strategies were recommended by the school building administration for bus drivers to use on school buses. I also sought to determine if student behavior on school buses has an impact at school by observations from school building administration.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study.

Research Question 1: To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with school building administration?

Research Question 2: To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with the transportation department?

Research Question 3: To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with student behaviors?

Research Question 4: What are the five most common behavior management strategies used by bus drivers?

Research Question 5: What are the most common behavior management strategies recommended by school building administrators?

Research Question 6: To what extent do school building administrators perceive the behavior of students on school buses impacts student behavior at school?

Research Question 7: What driver management practices do school building administrators perceive as the most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on buses?

Significance of Study

This study produced results from a survey by bus drivers who are currently using behavior management strategies and their satisfaction with school building administration, transportation department, and the behavior of bus students. There is limited research for behavior management strategies for bus drivers and satisfaction in the areas of school building administration, transportation department, and the behavior of bus students. Current and future

bus drivers may benefit from this study as they will review the behavior management strategies used by their colleagues. School building administrators could benefit from this study as it provides behavior management strategies offered by experienced administrators.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined to clarify any misunderstandings during this study.

Pupils - Synonymous with "students." "Pupils" is only used when it is a direct quote from a reference.

Regular bus route - Non-special education bus route.

Public transportation - Transportation offered to all students, made possible by the government.

Transportation Department - The department that oversees the transportation of students, including Transportation Director, Transportation Supervisor, and the Maintenance Department.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was conducted in a single east Tennessee county school system. The limitations of this study include the fact that the only participants were certified school bus route drivers in the east Tennessee school system who drive a regular school bus. This excluded substitute bus drivers, special education bus drivers, and alternative school bus drivers. This school system uses a district-owned operation of student transportation, which means the system bought the school buses, operates the school buses by school system hired bus drivers, and maintains the school buses by the transportation department of the school system (Douglas,

1986). The results of this part of the study may or may not be generalized to other bus drivers who drive regular school buses on regular school routes. The participants of the qualitative part of this study were selected school building administrators who have experience dealing with student behavior and bus drivers. Therefore the results of this part of the study may or may not be generalized to other school building administrators, depending on their personalities and atmosphere at their school.

This study has limitations with the number of bus drivers completing and returning the completed surveys. The responses from bus drivers were separated into appropriate categories based upon the age and years of experience of driving a school bus. The small number of responses in some of these categories resulted in another limitation.

Overview of Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of study, definitions of terms, and limitations and delimitations. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature covering the history of student transportation, bus drivers, school building administration, transportation department, and student behavior management strategies. Chapter 3 includes the research methodology and explains the research questions and null hypotheses, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 includes the findings. Chapter 5 includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains a review of literature pertaining to bus drivers and the behavior management strategies they may use on school buses. This chapter is divided into content areas. The first area is the history of school transportation, followed by bus drivers, school building administration, transportation department, and then student behavior.

Introduction

Each school day over 26 million students ride school buses between school and home with most of the students riding both in the morning and afternoon. Students from kindergarten to high school may ride on the same school bus. An estimated 440,000 to 480,000 school buses are used daily to transport students. (School transportation safety data, 2012) A school bus is defined as

> A passenger motor vehicle that is designed or used to carry more than 10
> passengers, in addition to the driver, and, as determined by the Secretary
> of Transportation, is likely to be significantly used for the purpose of
> transporting pre-primary, primary, or secondary school students between
> home and school. (Planned Glossary, 2012, para. 2)

School buses are driven by school bus drivers, and they require training and testing to legally drive students. School buses are built with safety in mind. Traveling by school bus is the safest mode of transportation for students between home and school. The federal government

revealed statistics that asserts bus transportation is nine times safer than passenger vehicles traveling the same route. Approximately 53% of students travel by a school bus (School transportation safety data, 2012).

School buses are built with safety features, but these safety features cannot eliminate the behavior of students. Students who display behavior problems can put the whole bus in a dangerous situation. If students display unacceptable behaviors on school buses, it could distract school drivers. If bus drivers are distracted while driving, events could unfold that could prove to be dangerous, even fatal. Bus drivers must use effective behavior management strategies to provide a safe trip for all students (Trotter, 1987).

<u>History of Student Transportation</u>

Education in the United States was first provided by churches in the 1600s, prior to the formal beginning of the nation. Public transportation for students did not begin until the late 1800s (History of school bus safety, 2000, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1989). Massachusetts was the first state to provide state-aided transportation in 1869 (Smith, 1977, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1989). By1910 there was some form of a public student transportation program in 30 states, most of it made possible by local communities (History of school bus safety. 2000). By 1919 all states had some type of law providing state-aided transportation for students (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1989). State legislatures were establishing official student transportation and by 1934 there were 23 states that mandated some type of student transportation to be established by the local school board (Smith, 1972).

As the population and motorized vehicles increased, 48 states had representatives in the gathering to develop standards for school buses and make recommendations in 1939. This gathering was named National Conference on School Transportation (NCST). Over 300 members of the NCST from the 50 states meet every 5 years to ensure students have protected and efficient transportation by establishing guidelines for bus safety (Baxter, 2005; History of NCST, 2005; School bus drivers, 2000). Although these members meet to develop consistent standards for school bus design and manufacturing, this Conference can only make recommendations of standards to federal and state agencies and legislatures and to school bus manufacturers. It was not until 1966 when the federal government passed the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act that the government agency, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), had the authority to set standards of safety for manufacturing school bus (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1989).

The state of Tennessee formally became involved in student transportation with the first transportation law in 1913 (Smith, 1972). Tennessee continued to develop the area of public transportation and had its first official Director of Pupil Transportation in 1962 (Keenan, Eidson, Farmer, Shew, & Gallego, 2006). Tennessee has currently approximately 8,600 school buses that are operable (Department of Safety, n.d.)

Since the early public transportation system started in the late 1800s, the mode of student transportation has changed dramatically. While few students lived close enough to walk to a school, many students traveled to school by any means available by their families. Traveling in a wagon might have been done for some families, while some students simply rode a horse to a

school. Students also traveled to school in a canoe or rowboat. (Smith, 1977) The 20th century

brought two new developments that not only increased the number of students attending school

but also how students got to school: "(a) hard surfaced, all-weather roads and (b) the motor

vehicle industry" (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1989, p. 22). What started

as horse drawn carts to transport students developed to motorized wagons and has now evolved

to big yellow school buses that can carry more students (History of school bus safety, 2000).

With the introduction and development of school buses across the nation, school bus drivers

needed to become more prepared to transport students safely.

Bus Drivers

The most important person in the school bus is the bus driver. Bus drivers are hired

personnel obtained to transport students safely. While carrying out the duties of this position

sounds easy, requirements must be met to become a bus driver. Bus drivers not only have to

meet certain qualifications but also fulfill the duties and responsibilities to ensure safe bus rides

for everyone.

Qualifications of Bus Drivers

The Tennessee Department of Education (1994) states four standards are to be met when

deciding to hire bus drivers:

> 1. They must possess a commercial drivers license with all required endorsements.
> 2. They must undergo a minimum of one physical examination per year.
> 3. They must be of good moral character, and
> 4. They must be neat in appearance, courteous to parents and children, and cooperative with teachers and school officials. (p. 12)

According to board policy from the Sevier County School System (Board Policy BP253, 2011), "The Board of Education employs qualified, responsible bus drivers. As such both the law and Board policy mandate that bus drivers comply with the Tennessee Commercial Driver License manual and similar regulations set forth by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)" (para. 1). Even though the State of Tennessee issues the license to drive a school bus, the FMCSA regulates the states by setting the minimum standards to qualify for the license. The Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 ensures continuity among all states by having drivers meet minimum requirements to obtain and maintain commercial license. (Commercial Driver's License Program, n.d.)

A person must obtain a Commercial Driver License (CDL) in order to operate "(a)ny vehicle designed to transport more than fifteen (15) passengers in addition to the driver, or if the vehicle is used as a school bus, regardless of the weight of the vehicle" (Commercial driver license manual, 2011, p. 1-1). The potential bus driver must take and pass four written tests: General Knowledge, Air Brakes, Passenger Transport, and School Bus. A Skills Test must be taken to demonstrate the ability of driving a school bus before the CDL is approved. A person must meet requirements before obtaining a CDL including being 21 years old, having a current and valid Department of Transportation (DOT) physical, providing proof of being a United States citizen or a Lawful Permanent resident, providing two pieces of identification proving residency in the state of Tennessee, and having a current driver license. Before taking the School Bus written test or performing the Skills Test, the potential bus driver must be hired by the school system and present a letter of employment to the Driver Service Center (p. 1-11).

To continue meeting the qualifications of having a school bus driver license, bus drivers must attend a mandatory 4-hour bus training program annually sponsored by the State of Tennessee Pupil Transportation Section (Department of Safety & Homeland Security, n.d.). Bus drivers are required to take a written test after this meeting. Bus drivers must also pass physical and mental examinations annually as a requirement to continue holding a commercial driver license. (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2005)

Duties and Responsibilities of Bus Drivers

After a person meets the qualifications of becoming a bus driver, the hired bus driver will have duties to perform and responsibilities to uphold. Bus driver must do physical tasks such as sweeping and cleaning the bus daily (Tennessee Department of Education, 1997) Bus drivers must also "promote safety habits with the group of pupils transported" (p. 13). A student who misbehaves has to be reported to the administrator of the school the student attends. Bus drivers should have a pleasant and courteous relationship with parents and students, work with the administration and staff of the schools, and "maintain satisfactory control of children entrusted to his care" (p. 14). Bus drivers need to develop these important relationships to ensure a successful student transportation program.

While the operations of driving school buses are important, the first responsibility of bus drivers "is to operate the school bus in a safe and efficient manner" (Farmer, 1975, p. 78). This is also stressed by Douglas (1986), "The main goal of any school transportation system is the safety of the pupils" (p. 72).

School Building Administration

Bus drivers usually do not have contact with many adults during their jobs due to their work environment. However, one person often in contact with bus drivers is the school building administrator. The administrators have many responsibilities including the discipline of students who do not display appropriate behaviors, regardless if students are in the classroom, in the hallway, or on the school bus. The administrators are the initial school personnel bus drivers contact regarding students on school buses. Whether it be a written letter of referral or a conversation via electronics, phone, or face-to-face, all reports of students' behavior should be handled by the administrators decisively, promptly, and successfully at the students' school. If administrators fail to discipline or the discipline is not appropriate to the situation, bus drivers could witness more behavior issues on school buses that could lead in time to bus drivers becoming discouraged or frustrated and eventually leave the transportation department (Farmer, 1975).

Communication between the school administrator and bus drivers is essential in the success of any behavior management program. Neatrour (1994) states after implementing a school bus behavior program, bus drivers communicate daily with a school representative by having the bus duty teacher greet school buses in the morning by boarding the bus and talking directly to bus drivers about the behaviors of students. Neatrour adds that this system has improved communication between bus drivers and school administration by following the communication arrangement. The bus duty teacher takes notes from bus drivers while students are still on the bus and, when needed, sends a written report directly to the administration. This program also has a guarantee time period from the administration to bus drivers of responding to

the bus report of any unacceptable behaviors of students. The bus duty teacher is assigned to a particular school bus for a period of time, so the teacher and bus driver know each other and have a routine of communication on a regular basis. Neatrour concludes by stating this program has the results of a decline in the reports given to the administration by bus drivers and, therefore, a safer bus ride for everyone.

Administrators are expected to participate for bus drivers to have success in implementing behavior management strategies. Administrators should discuss with bus drivers issues of what behaviors are not acceptable and the extent of these behaviors. Administrators should also communicate with bus drivers on successful behavior management strategies that can be used on school buses (Button, 1988). Bus drivers are not trained extensively in behavioral psychology and are not encouraged to deal with major behavior problems from students on the bus. Farmer (1975) states "disturbances warranting disciplinary action should be referred to the principal of the school in which the offending pupil is enrolled" (p. 78). These behavior problems are to be rectified by the administrators quickly.

Administrators are needed to handle more serious behavior problems by administrating appropriate discipline to the guilty student(s). Lack of addressing the serious behavior problems and permitting these behaviors to continue by administrators may affect other students and others. Bus drivers could lose their concentration while driving and the results could be dangerous for many (Button, 1984).

A school system in Ohio arranged for a local college psychology professor to come and communicate skills to bus drivers in a training session. After the training, some bus drivers were invited to attend the administrators' retreat during the summer and speak to the administrators.

26

Bus drivers told administrators the students know which administrators take bus referrals seriously, and students will misbehave on school buses when they know they will not get in trouble. As a result of the training and discussion with administrators, bus drivers are reporting fewer discipline referrals (Vail, 1997).

Dillon (2001) stated that being proactive in developing a bus safety program improved a particular school's referrals from bus drivers. This particular school started an educational program to promote the theme of Peaceful School Bus. This program emphasizes cooperation and getting along with others on school buses. Bus drivers had very positive remarks about this program, and during the span of 1 year there was a significant decrease in referrals from bus drivers for behaviors.

Neatrour (1994) states that for a particular middle school, students who do not follow the bus rules must earn the privilege of riding on the school bus by going to school. Students are given two rules to follow on the school bus: sit and ride. The reason for these two rules was if students stay in their seats then most behavior problems would be reduced. If a student is disruptive on the school bus, the student automatically loses the privilege of riding the bus. The parents of the student are notified and must transport the student to school the following school day. The student is then required to stay in the in-school suspension room where the bus rider training area is located the next morning. During this time the area is set up like a school bus with actual bus seats and a mannequin bus driver in the driver's seat. The student must complete three activities during this time.

1. Sits and rides while watching a 30-minute video on bus safety entitled Trouble Spots.

2. Takes a short test to validate the riding rules.

3. Signs a contract guaranteeing safe, proper behavior in the future.

The student then receives a certificate of completion and must present it to the bus driver the next day before riding the school bus. The evidence of this program's success is a significant decline in the bus reports sent from bus drivers to school administrators.

Student behavior can improve when bus drivers have a system of communication with administrators and students. Myers (as cited by Vail, 1997), a school psychologist who observed the students and bus drivers as she rode school buses, stated "Kids misbehave on the bus because they can. The driver is not empowered by the school or the parents" (p. 35). This school system in Florida developed a bus program that emphasized improving communication of bus drivers with school administrators and bus drivers with students. Bus drivers started to keep a log and write the name of any student who misbehaves on the bus, what is occurring, and how long and often it occurs. The principals agreed to react to discipline referrals within 48 hours. Bus drivers write and communicate the rules of school buses and inform the students the consequences of breaking the rules on the bus. Bus drivers in this school system reported more respectful students and more responsive school administrators.

Transportation Department

The most important department to bus drivers is the transportation department. It all starts there. Before a CDL driver could drive a school bus in this particular county, there is a process that has to be followed. Although the school system officially hires bus drivers, the first step of employment is to have an employment authorization form completed by the transportation director. The next steps include completed application, background checks,

medical exam, and then an orientation meeting with all of the required paperwork. This process

is in place to make sure that there are no cracks and everything is done legally (Sevier County

School, 2012).

Many components comprise a transportation department. The most responsible person in

the transportation department is the transportation director. This person has the duty to oversee

the whole transportation department and answers to the superintendent of schools and school

board. This person also communicates to the public on transportation issues. The transportation

director hires and delegate responsibilities to others, including hiring bus drivers and delegating

the responsibility of transporting students. The mechanics of school buses, personnel, and route

layouts are just part of the job description in the transportation department. (Douglas, 1986;

Farmer, 1975)

Although the transportation director has many responsibilities and duties to perform, like

school bus drivers, safety is the main responsibility. "The safe transportation of children is every

(transportation) administrator's highest priority. Everything else is subordinate, and the drivers

must always be conscious of it" (Miller, 1988, p. 102) The mindset of safety must be developed

and maintained by the whole transportation department due to the influence it has on bus drivers

and of course the students.

Training

Training is usually needed in any vocation. Driving a school bus in no exception.

Miller (1988) states, "The training of bus drivers does not end when they receive their license

and start their first assignment. It's just beginning" (p. 100). The training bus drivers receive is

29

usually on how to operate the bus. "Bus drivers don't receive a significant amount of training on how to manage students" stated Salvador Morales, the Transportation Director of El Mirage, Arizona, (as cited by Vail, 1997, p. 34). Training is mostly about mechanics and maintenance and little on behavior management. Training is done on empty school buses, but skills must be executed with the audience of approximately 55 students. The Director of Traffic for the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), John Hedlund, recommends all states develop and implement a driver curriculum, but currently states are not required to do so. Hedlund asserts that a driver curriculum would include behind-the-wheel training for bus drivers and would prepare drivers to be better bus drivers (Vail, 1996).

Holding meetings with bus drivers on a regular schedule allows bus drivers to obtain support before they grow to be irritated. Mary Truelove, transportation coordinator in a school system in North Carolina, conducts biweekly meetings with the 75 bus drivers to talk about student discipline. Bus drivers in this school system also attend workshops on student behavior management. Experts in different areas recommend guidelines and strategies to bus drivers to assist them during the bus routes. Teambuilding and communications skill are examples of workshops for bus drivers. Through training and support with biweekly meetings and workshops, bus drivers are happier and less frustrated.   Truelove states "They (bus drivers) see themselves as just as professional as everyone else." (as cited by Vail, 1997, p. 36)

The implementation of conducting workshops that focuses on student discipline is another type of training for bus drivers. The workshops reflect on communication issues between bus drivers and other school personnel, including administration, principals, and

teachers, and on frustrations of inappropriate behaviors of students and how to deal with the students and their behaviors (Kravas & Kravas, 1977). School bus drivers need to be trained on the successful use of their personalities with students when an opportunity develops on school buses (Button, 1988).

A school system in Ohio arranged for a psychology professor from a local college to come to a meeting for one training with bus drivers and have discussions of various topics. Topics covered during this training were creating a positive environment, remaining composed, and keeping a smooth tone of voice on the school bus (Vail, 1997).

Farmer (1989) suggests two training programs for bus drivers: preservice and inservice training. During the preservice training the bus driver will be trained on bus discipline and the school board's transportation policy. The inservice training would be to review such topics as child behavior and discipline. These training programs would be beneficial for the school and school system to improve the bus driver's level of competency of driving a school bus. Button (1984) states that in order to realize their role in transporting students, both bus drivers and administrators need an inservice program.

Bus drivers in a school system in Georgia attend inservice training to receive information on student management and child development along with principals. During this inservice training bus drivers discover why students behave the way they do, learn expectations of students, and learn effective behavior management strategies to use with students (Vail, 1997).

A school superintendent from Texas, Jerry Doyle, offers suggestions for training of bus drivers. Doyle recommends bus drivers receive more than the required 20 hours of training currently in place in Texas. Out of the 20 required hours of training, only 2 hours are not in a

classroom watching videotapes. Doyle states this training is "meager, awful" (as cited by Vail, 1996, para. 8). Doyle recommends at least 60 hours for a bus driver training program, that is similar to the training program at trucking-schools, with more behind-the-wheel experience.

Engaging bus drivers to be part of the solution to bullying on school buses includes training. Providing the training for bus drivers to recognize bullying and intervene in bullying situations on school buses should be a goal of school systems. Training bus drivers to follow appropriate protocol will empower bus drivers to report bullying and follow through with their reports. The goal of any type of training on bullying is to eliminate bullying and reduce scenarios that are not pleasant (Harrison, 2005, Lieberman, 2002).

Communication

Communication is "the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else" (Communication, n.d.). According to Miller (1988), "...communication is the ability to make people understand what you're trying to say and write" (p. 42). "Effective communications are a two-way process" states Douglas (1986, p.34) and will be used daily between bus drivers and the transportation department. Communication is especially difficult when people are not face-to-face but miles apart. Bus drivers are in their own workplace with no other adults around when they are driving school buses. They have to make decisions at a moment's notice without the leisure of asking colleagues or a supervisor. Communication, either via phone or two-way radios, between bus drivers and the transportation department is critical.

Supervising bus drivers is more than conducting bus safety meetings. It involves

recognizing bus drivers for their daily task of transporting students. Miller (1988) recommends

transportation supervisors ride with bus drivers periodically to give support and to correct any

faulty habits that may have developed. This type of managing is named 'field supervision' and if

performed correctly, it could be "highly motivating" (pp. 100-101). The supervisor should focus

on the positive because "no one ever makes true progress in a negative environment" (p. 101).

The transportation supervisor should give praise to bus drivers in public, and any corrections

should be conducted when in private.

The transportation department should develop a relationship with school building

administration. The transportation department can assist the administration on issues such as

discipline of students, extracurricular activities, location of pickups and drop-offs, and student

supervision. By communicating effectively the transportation department will present a

constructive and positive attitude to the school and thereby support bus drivers in an indirect

manner (Douglas, 1986).

<center>Student Behavior Management Strategies</center>

The Tennessee CDL Manual (Commercial, 2011) has some strategies listed in the

Student Management section to guide the bus drivers.

> 10.5 - Student Management
>
> *10.5.1 Don't Deal with On-bus Problems*
>
> *When Loading and Unloading*
>
> In order to get students to and from school safely and on time, you need to be
>
> able to concentrate on the driving task.

Loading and unloading requires all your concentration. Don't take your eyes off

what is happening outside the bus. If there is a behavior problem on the bus, wait

until the students unloading are safely off the bus and have moved away. If

necessary, pull the bus over to handle the problem.

10.5.2 - Handling Serious Problems

Tips on handling serious problems:

Follow your school's procedures for discipline or refusal of rights to ride the bus

Stop the bus. Park in a safe location off the road, perhaps a parking lot or a

driveway.

Secure the bus. Take the ignition key with you if you leave your seat.

Stand up and speak respectfully to the offender or offenders. Speak in a

courteous manner with a firm voice. Remind the offender of the expected

behavior. Do not show anger, but do show that you mean business.

If a change of seating is needed, request that the student move to a seat near you.

Never put a student off the bus except at school or at his or her designated school

bus stop. If you feel that the offense is serious enough that you cannot safely

drive the bus, call for a school administrator or the police to come and remove the

student. Always follow your state or local procedures for requesting assistance

(p. 10-10)

Even though bus drivers are being held accountable for the safety of students, students

have responsibilities also. According to the particular school system board policy "A student

will not misbehave on any school bus" (Board Policy BP 632, 2007, p. 5). To expand on this

policy the same school system adopted the board policy for bus conduct (Board Policy BP 610, n.d.), that states,

> The school bus is an extension of school activity; therefore, students must conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for safety and classroom behavior. Students are under the supervision and control of the bus driver while on his/her bus and all reasonable directions given by the driver will be followed. (paras. 1 & 2)

School bus drivers have suggested several behavior management strategies (School Bus Fleet, 2011). One strategy is the use of surveillance cameras on the school bus. This strategy works when students realize they are being watched and recorded. Dealing with bullying and reviewing any accident issues becomes easier with a video and audio recording of the interior of the bus. Another strategy used by bus drivers is having assigned seats for students. Generally buses have the younger students sit in the front, high school students sit in the rear, and the students in-between sit in the middle. The use of rewarding positive behavior is another strategy. Bus drivers and schools can establish a reward system for students when they are displaying positive or correct behaviors on the bus. The next strategy is playing the radio on the bus. The volume of the radio will help keep the volume of the students down, which will allow the bus driver to focus on driving. One suggestion has to do with the length of service on a school bus. Driving the same bus route for an extended time period may improve the relationship between school bus drivers and students. This will help the bus drivers know the students and allow time for the bus drivers to determine which strategies work best for the bus and the students.

Farmer (1987) urges bus drivers to develop relationships with students. Bus drivers must care about students in all aspects of their lives while respecting students. Bus drivers must develop and display a good sense of humor, praise students when they exhibit good behavior, and search and recognize students' good traits and decisions instead of the bad ones. Farmer also insists the bus driver be the person who sets a standard for the students to follow, even when the position of bus driver is finished. He also reminds bus drivers to remember no two students are alike in all areas. The relationship between bus drivers and students is a continual effort and requires maintenance daily throughout the year.

All students need be treated equally by bus drivers (Miller, 1988). Bus drivers should be fair and impartial when dealing with students. Bus drivers should treat each student as their own child. If bus drivers have to communicate to students about behavior problems, Miller suggests bus drivers talk to students about the problem. It would be best to talk to students before they leave the bus at the school in the morning. If the problems continue, then talk to the students who have the behavior problems after the other students leave in the morning. If after talking to the students the behavior problems continue, then Miller recommends bus drivers report the behavior problems to the school building administrator for disciplinary action. Miller advises bus drivers to assign students who have behavior problems to sit on particular seats during the bus route. Having assigned seats may assist students with controlling their behaviors if they are not sitting with their peers.

Douglas (1986) states some suggestions for bus drivers to use to control behavior on the school bus are to be consistent every day, be fair by treating everyone the same, be prepared by knowing the rules and policies and knowing how to act and react, be friendly to all students with

a smile and concern, be sincere with students, be able to laugh at yourself while developing a sense of humor, be to the point and never argue with any student, be positive when making directive statements such as 'do this' and not 'don't do that', and be a good example by following the rules and expectations. Douglas also suggests for bus drivers to be constructive by pointing out students' good behaviors, be proactive and not allow a situation to get out of control, be optimistic and give praise to students who are behaving correctly, be patient and give students time to change behavior, and be considerate to talk in private to any student when there is a problem. He concludes with two more suggestions of making sure all students know the bus rules by stating them at the beginning of the year and reviewing the rules periodically during the school year, and talking to students when the bus is at a stop and not while the bus is in motion.

Controlling noise on school buses is very important to keep bus drivers concentrating on driving. A method of controlling noise and stimulating minds is to have students read books while riding school buses (Reading and riding keep students quiet and happy, 2004). A particular driver stated she started a reading club as a way to keep students interested in an activity that was not disruptive during the long bus ride and considers this method a success. She also stressed the importance of bus drivers being an example to students.

School psychologist Mary Myers (as cited by Vail, 1997) recommends bus drivers establish a relationship with students who display behavior problems on school buses. After she rode school buses, she noticed that most of the time there were three to five students who were 'real troublemakers' on school buses. Improving communication with students and developing a rapport with them are two strategies for dealing with behavior problems. Bus drivers are

suggested to use 'active listening' to students. Effective communication may avoid unnecessary conflicts with students (Kravas & Kravas, 1977).

Bullying

A problem with student behavior in all areas of the school is the potential bullying that may occur. To bully, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is "to frighten, hurt, or threaten (a smaller or weaker person) (Bully, n.d.). Bullying is different from aggressive and violent behaviors. Astor, Guerra, and Acker (2010) state bullying "refers to aggression or violence based on an asymmetry in power between the perpetrator and victim and perpetrated on a recurring basis" (p.70), whereas aggressive and violent behaviors "can occur without an asymmetry in power and on a one-time basis" (p. 70). Although bullying and aggressive and violent behaviors can occur on school buses, bullying is repeated targeting of a particular student. This may occur when bus drivers are keeping their eyes on the road and not on the students in order to transport the students safely (Harrison, 2005). What the bus drivers see in mirrors is major movement such as physical fighting, but they overlook minor movements of students, such as shoving, pinching, and pushing. Bus drivers also cannot see verbal bullying such as name-calling or verbal comments about sexual preference, body appearance, racial or cultural difference, and family situation. Bullying in a closed environment with no place to escape, such as a school bus, would easily make the trip dreadful for the targeted students.

Parental Support

Like many things in life, students typically become aware of safety and danger at home.

Douglas (1986) states "safety awareness must begin at home and be consistently reinforced" (p. 100). Douglas continues by encouraging parents to stress to their child(ren) the necessity of staying in the seat and being quiet while the school bus is moving. Asking parents to support the policies and procedures of the school system and the school bus is another strategy for bus drivers and administration use to ensure the safety of students. Button (1988) states the need of compelling parents to be active participants "in training their child in correct safety procedures" and "providing their child with a positive attitude toward their own safety" (pp.28-30) Materials need to be offered and given to parents.

Dealing with the behavior problems with parental support on the day it occurs has been a success for one school system in California (Atkinson, 2009). John Farr, Director of Transportation, states this program is successful because "The consequences are immediate for the student, which is the way it has to be" (para. 6). Farr explains the process of having the bus driver contact the student's parents that evening if the student does not stop the inappropriate behavior after a warning from the bus driver. By using this strategy, the bus driver is using intervention with the parent before sending a bus referral to the school administrator concerning the student. If the behavior problem continues or if the parent does not support the bus driver, the bus driver asks to meet with the parent and a school administrator. The results for administrators have been great, "...bus discipline took up probably 20 percent of his (assistant principal) day" (para. 11). The results indicate a reduction of bus discipline problems by 20% on a daily average.

Farmer (1985) states the adopted policies by the local school board for disciplinary issues on school buses should be communicated at the beginning of the school year to both

students and parents. The adopted policies must be carried through by the school board when the situation demands it or the behavior on the bus will not improve. He emphasizes the "behavior of transported children must be controlled".

Vail (1997) states that a school system in Georgia made changes to its bus discipline policy when the transportation director discovered over half of the bus drivers who quit left due to student behavior on the bus. The transportation director enlisted principals to conduct trainings with bus drivers about child development and strategies to control student behavior. Bus drivers informed the transportation director that the basis of their failure to keep order on the bus was their lack of authority. Before the trainings the only actions bus drivers could take was to make a written report to the administrators. The new bus program allows bus drivers to take action with the parents and gives bus drivers information about the students. The new discipline plan permits bus drivers to call the parents of misbehavers. If behavior problems continue then school administrators get involved and have a meeting with parents at the school. The schools reported a reduction in referrals from the previous year by 50% to 80%.

Positive Reinforcement

The ways of rewarding students on school buses can start out by complimenting students on their fine behavior. Proceeding further with compliments is writing positive notes to students and to parents of students. Although food can be an incentive to students, this reward should be avoided because of policies. To keep rewards interesting to students, the incentive system should be revamped on a regular basis (Trotter, 1987).

Bus drivers may also use tangible incentives to present students with a reason to have

acceptable behavior. Schools may have rewards programs for bus students who earn praise from bus drivers. The incentives may range from stickers to treats (Trotter, 1987).

Dawson and Sanders (1997) state that a bus program that eliminates negative behaviors and rewards positive behaviors can be successful. The students, administrators, bus drivers, and parents are happier when a program is developed and implemented. The four steps to a successful bus program are careful planning, consistency, good communication, and training.

Peer Intervention

One strategy of improving student behavior on school buses is peer intervention. A study was done in Kansas using group contingent time-out when unacceptable student behavior occurred on evening bus routes. The bus was stopped when any student displayed unacceptable behavior. During the study when the bus stopped, peers reacted to correct the desired behavior. All of the students had to display the desired behaviors before the bus started to move again. The results of this study showed a dramatic improvement in the desired behaviors by the students (Campbell, Adams, & Ryabik, 1974).

In one elementary school in Texas students were having inappropriate behaviors on school buses. Students were being physical with each other, objects were being thrown, and items were being taken from students. Bus drivers had a difficult time managing the school buses and three bus drivers quit in 1 month. Students were not coming to school able to learn. The guidance counselors set up a peer helper program for the students who rode these buses. The counselors set up a career development program for the older students. The older students were to be flight attendants on the school buses to assist the younger students in having a safe

and comfortable trip. The older students were trained on how to be a flight attendant and the tasks they must perform to fulfill this position. The students then transferred these skills to the school bus and they role-played potential scenarios. The older students were assigned two younger students to be their passengers. The older students introduced themselves to their passengers and informed them that they were there to make their trip safe and comfortable. This program had instant success as the acceptable behaviors increased even as the counselors removed their constant support. The students were more conducive to learning at school, were more safer on school buses, and were more pleasant according to the school (Carns, 1996).

Adult Helpers

Bus drivers may enjoy the students who are being transported but there is concern for bus drivers to control students while driving school buses. There have been some lawsuits pertaining to bus drivers' lack of ability to perform both roles at the same time. Due to the concern over legal implications that might arise due to bus drivers not being able to control students while driving school buses, some buses may have adults who ride with the students in order to aid with student behaviors (Mawdsley, 1996). While some buses have volunteers, some buses have assistants who are hired by the school system. The bus monitors would support bus drivers in reducing the distractions on school buses. Bus monitors would also be able to improve the time students stay in their seats (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1989). With the number of students and the varying types of personalities of students, the support of assistants helps bus drivers keep their focus on the road and bus drivers are very appreciative. Bus driver Ellie Frechette stated "When you think of transportation, everything is

usually about the driver. You don't think about the assistants, but they need to know they're

important" (Reading and riding keep students quiet and happy, 2004, p. 10).

Chapter Summary

       This chapter includes the literature pertaining to the history of student transportation, the

qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of bus drivers, the school building administration, the

transportation department with the focus on training and communication, and student behavior

management strategies that include parental support, positive reinforcement, peer interaction,

and adult helpers. It is noted I did not find any literature pertaining to the gender of bus drivers.

It is also noted I did not find any literature of the satisfaction level of bus drivers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

School systems employ bus drivers to safely transport students between home and

school. Bus drivers have responsibilities they must fulfill in order to drive the students safely.

Part of the responsibilities are to ensure the students are displaying appropriate actions and say

appropriate words while on the bus. The purpose of this study was first to determine the

satisfaction level of bus drivers pertaining to school building administration, transportation

department, and student behaviors, and second to identify the common behavior management

strategies used by bus drivers in a particular school system in east Tennessee. I also compared

the common behavior management strategies used by school bus drivers who are also employed

by the school system in some position in addition to this vocation, in particular in a school

building, with school bus drivers who are not employed by the school system other than driving

the school bus. A quantitative comparative design was used to investigate the differences of the

common behavior management strategies used by bus drivers employed by the school system in

another position and bus drivers employed by the school system only as bus drivers.

I also interviewed school building administration in the same east Tennessee school

system for their perspective on student behavior management strategies recommended for bus

drivers to use on school buses. During the same interview I sought the school building

administrations' perspective on the impact student behavior on a school bus has on a student at

school. I also solicited responses from school building administrators of their perspective of

driver management practices that seem most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on buses.

<div align="center">

Research Questions and Corresponding Null Hypotheses

</div>

The following research questions and null hypotheses were used to guide the study.

Research Question 1:

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with school building administration?

H_o1: Bus drivers are not satisfied or dissatisfied with school building administration to a significant extent.

Research Question 2:

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with the transportation department?

H_o2: Bus drivers are not satisfied or dissatisfied with the transportation department to a significant extent.

Research Question 3:

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior?

H_o3: Bus drivers are not satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior to a significant extent.

Research Question 4:

What are the five most important behavior management strategies used by bus drivers?

Research Question 5:

>What are the most common behavior management strategies recommended by school building administrators for bus drivers to use on school buses?

Research Question 6:

>To what extent do school building administrators perceive the behavior of students on school buses impacts student behavior at school?

Research Question 7:

>What driver management practices do school building administrators perceive as the most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on buses?

Population and Sample

The first population of this study was the school bus drivers in a particular school system in east Tennessee. This school system has over 14,500 students and 121 buses. There are 96 bus drivers who drive regular bus routes that travel to and from 23 primary, intermediate, middle, high, and K-8 schools. Demographic data were collected during the survey and included age group, gender, years of driving experience, years of experience in this particular school system, years of experience on the current bus route, and employed by this particular school system in another position other than bus driver.

The second population of this study was school building administrators in the same east Tennessee school system. The school system has 23 primary, intermediate, middle, high, and K-8 schools. Using purposeful sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006), a sample of the population was interviewed based on the years of experience (minimum of 5 years of

administration duties) and the type of school the administrator works at in the school system.

Instrumentation

For the quantitative element of this study, the survey included two areas: 1) satisfaction of bus drivers in areas of school building administration, transportation department, and student behavior and 2) specific areas bus drivers may use behavior management strategies on school buses. Bus drivers responded to questions 12-31 on the survey on driver satisfaction using a 1-5 scale with 1 being extremely dissatisfied to 5 being extremely satisfied, with 3 being neutral, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Bus drivers responded to question 32 on the survey on behavior management strategies used on school buses. There were 15 areas that bus drivers could respond to using a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the most important and 1 being the fifth most important strategy they use on school buses.

The survey was developed based upon two sources: the Literature Review and the conversations I had with current bus drivers. The current bus drivers gave their input on present and past behavior management strategies used on their school buses. A pilot study with four bus drivers was conducted to ensure that the instructions were clear and the questions were understandable and asked for the appropriate information. Bus drivers participating in the pilot study were excluded from completing the survey used to collect data in this study. The responses and comments from bus drivers in the pilot study were used to ensure the survey had appropriate language and was logical.

For the qualitative element, I conducted interviews with school building administrators. I used purposeful sampling as the tool to best select the administrators with the experience and type of school to collect the requested information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Administrators were asked to provide responses that were thorough and complete. I conducted

the interview using the interview guide approach.

Data Collection

I submitted the required forms to the Institutional Research Board (IRB) and received permission to conduct the study using surveys. I contacted the Director of Schools of this particular county for permission to collect data from bus drivers, interview school building administrators, and conduct the study. After permission by the Director of Schools was received I contacted the Transportation Director of this particular county for assistance in the distribution of the surveys. The Transportation Director and I collaborated in selecting the schools to distribute the surveys to the bus drivers. I contacted the principals of the selected schools and asked for their cooperation in distributing the surveys. The surveys were manually distributed to the bus drivers by a person other than the administrator of selected schools at the start of the afternoon route. A cover letter was attached to each survey to inform bus drivers of the purpose of the survey and assure anonymity. Bus drivers were asked to complete the survey anonymously. Bus drivers were instructed to put their completed survey in a preaddressed stamped envelope and put it in the mail to be returned to me.

I then contacted school building administrators to set up an appointment for an interview. I informed the administrators the purpose of the study and inquired of a convenient time. Upon meeting with the administrators, I displayed the letter from the Director of Schools in the school system and the IRB approval letter. The administrators were informed of the purpose of the study. The administrators were asked seven open-ended questions and I recorded their responses. I then repeated the responses to the administrators to verify their responses.

<center>Data Analysis</center>

Upon the collection of the surveys, I received the surveys in the mail. I organized the survey responses 12-16, 17-25, and 26-31 into three categories for Research Questions 1 through 3 respectively. I organized the responses on question 32 with a value of 5 of being the most important and a value of 1 of being the fifth most important.

I used a series of single sample t-tests for Research Questions 1 through 3. Bus drivers were requested to complete a survey on their satisfaction in three different areas: school building administration, transportation department, and student behavior. The survey requested responses from bus drivers from 1 for extremely dissatisfied to 5 for extremely satisfied, with 3 being the test value that represents neutrality.

Research Question 4 required responses from bus drivers on the behavior management strategies they use on their school buses. I requested responses from bus drivers on the top five behavior management strategies used on school bus. Bus drivers were asked to rank the top five behavior management strategies used on school bus with a 1 to the most important to a 5 as the fifth most important. A value to each response using a reverse value was applied with a value of 5 to the most important and a value of 1 to the fifth most important. I added all values for each behavior strategy listed and listed the top five in order to address Research Question 4. I then organized the responses to include the top five responses from bus drivers based on age, years of experience, school building position, and gender.

The results of Research Questions 5, 6, and 7 are reported qualitatively. Research Question 5 required responses by school building administrators on the common behavior management strategies they recommend bus drivers use on school buses. Although they were

not solicited as the top five, I listed the responses in order by the administrators as the most mentioned during the interview. Research Question 6 also required responses by school building administrators to provide their perspective of student behavior on school buses and if they believe there is any impact at school. This part of the interview focused on what they witness about students who ride school buses and the effects the bus trip has on students in their school. Research Question 7 required response by school building administrators on their perspective on driver management practices that are most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on school buses.

Chapter Summary

This chapter includes the research methodology for this study. It includes the research questions and null hypotheses, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was first to determine the satisfaction level of bus drivers pertaining to school building administration, transportation department, and student behaviors and second to identify the common behavior management strategies used by bus driver in a particular school system in east Tennessee. I also compared the common behavior management strategies used by school bus drivers who are also employed by the school system in some position in addition to this vocation, in particular in a school building, with school bus drivers who are not employed by the school system other than driving the school bus. I also interviewed school building administration in the same east Tennessee school system for their perspective on student behavior management strategies recommended for bus drivers to use on school buses and also their perspective on the impact student behavior on a school bus has on a student at school. I also solicited responses from school building administrators of their perspective of driver management practices that seem most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on buses.

Surveys were distributed to 96 bus drivers who met the criteria for this research study. Of the 96 surveys given out, 40 surveys were returned. Of the 40 surveys returned, 40 surveys were completed per instructions to Research Questions 1-3. Of the 40 surveys returned, 36 surveys were completed per instructions to Research Question 4.

Research Question 1

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with school building administration?

H_o1: Bus drivers are not satisfied or dissatisfied with school building administration to a significant extent.

A single sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the satisfaction level bus drivers have with school building administration. The bus drivers evaluated their satisfaction level from 1 for extremely dissatisfied to 5 for extremely satisfied, with 3 being the test value which represents neutrality. The test was significant, $t(39) = 2.110$, p = .041. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Bus drivers were satisfied with school building administration ($M = 3.3250$, $SD = .97297$) to a significant extent. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was .0138 to .6362. Generally bus drivers are satisfied with school building administration. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the satisfaction level of school building administration.
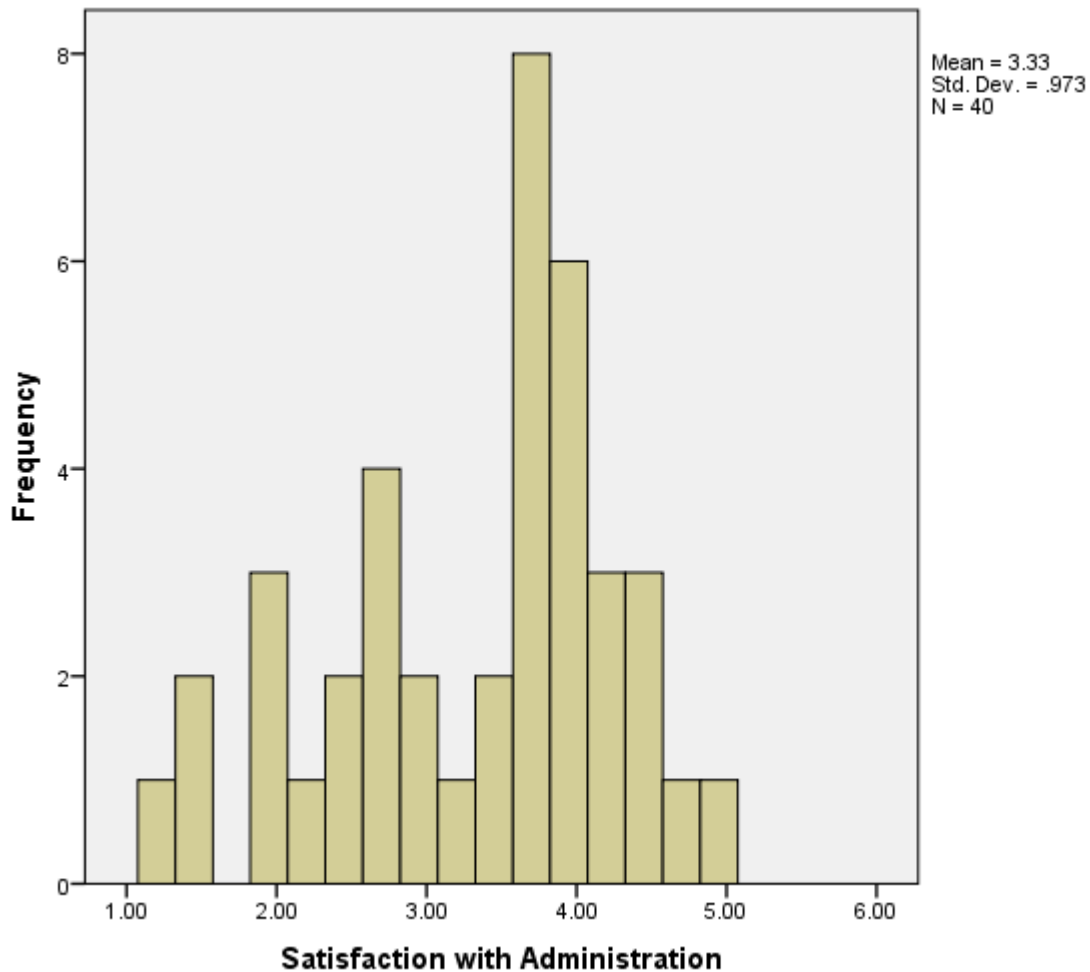
Figure 1. Distribution of the Satisfaction Level of School Building Administration

<div align="center">Research Question 2</div>

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with the transportation

department?

H_o2: Bus drivers are not satisfied or dissatisfied with the transportation department to a

significant extent.

A single sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the satisfaction level bus drivers have

with the transportation department. The bus drivers evaluated their satisfaction level from 1 for

extremely dissatisfied to 5 for extremely satisfied, with 3 being the test value which represents

neutrality. The test was significant, t(39) = 3.720, p = .001. Therefore, the null hypothesis was

rejected. Bus drivers were satisfied with the transportation department (*M* = 3.4255, *SD* =

.72334) to a significant extent. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was

.1942 to .6568. Generally bus drivers are satisfied with the transportation department. Figure 2

shows the distribution of the satisfaction level of the transportation department.
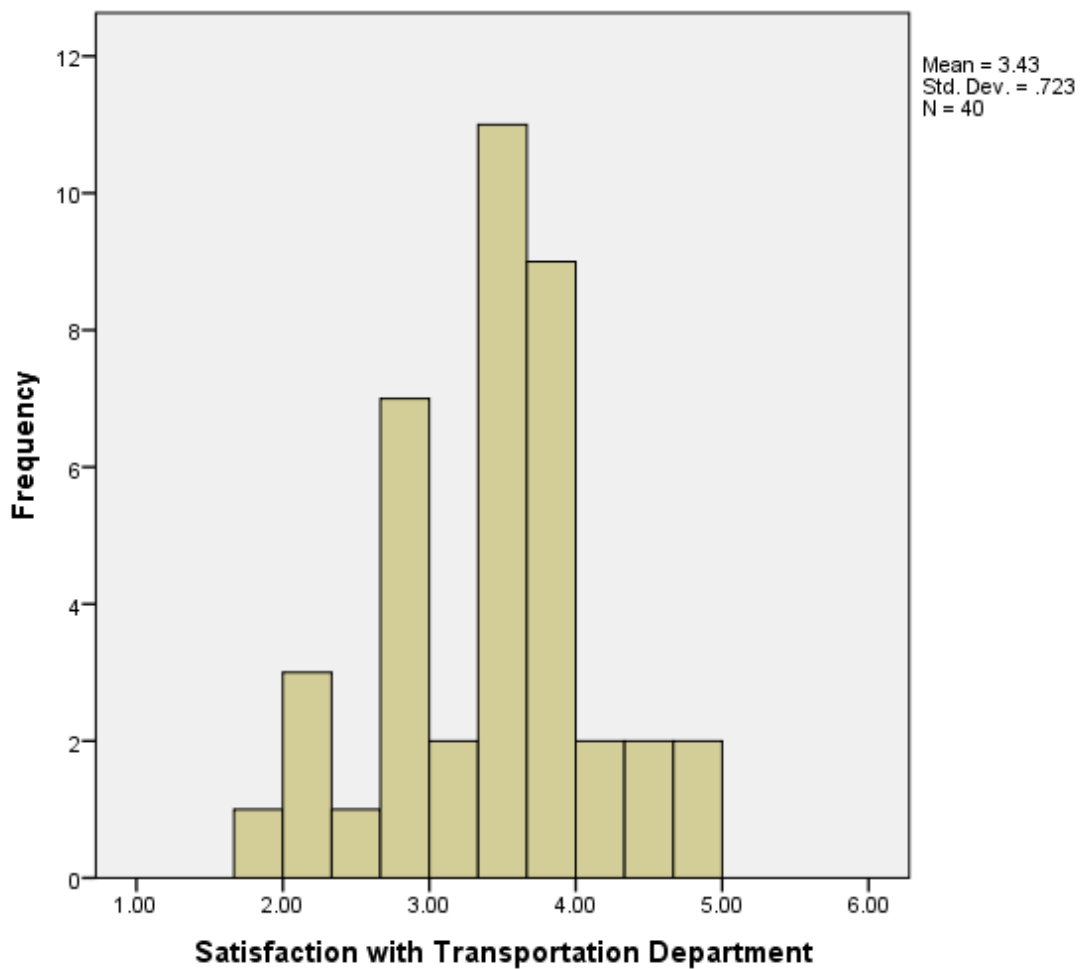
Figure 2. Distribution of Satisfaction Level of the Transportation Department

Research Question 3

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior?

H$_o$3: Bus drivers are not satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior to a significant extent.

A single sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the satisfaction level bus drivers have with student behavior. The bus drivers evaluated their satisfaction level from 1 for extremely dissatisfied to 5 extremely satisfied, with 3 being the test value which represents neutrality. The test was not significant, $t(39)$ = -.609, p = .546. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Bus drivers were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior (M = 2.8915, SD = 1.12720) to a significant extent. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.4690 to .2520. Generally bus drivers were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the satisfaction level of student behavior.
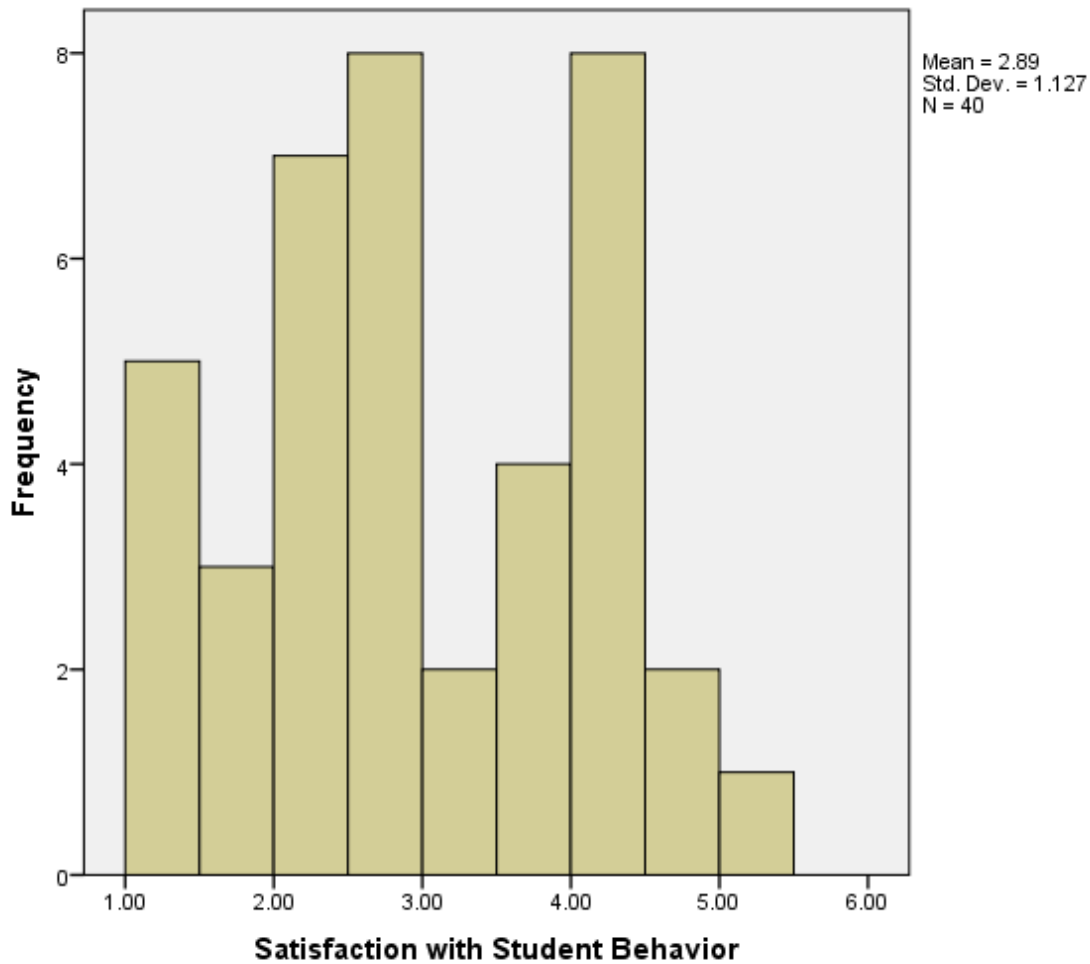
Figure 3. Distribution of Satisfaction Level of Student Behavior

<u>Research Question 4</u>

What are the five most important behavior management strategies used by bus drivers?

A frequency table was prepared to list the behavior management strategies used by bus drivers. The bus drivers ranked their top five behavior management strategies they use on their school buses, with 1 as the most important to 5 as the fifth most important. A value to each response was applied using a reverse value with a value of 5 to the most important and a value of 1 to the fifth most important. I added all values for each behavior strategy listed and listed

the top five in order. I then organized the responses to include the top five responses from bus

drivers based on age, years of experience, school building position, and gender.

The top behavior management strategies for all bus drivers:

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (93)
2. Reporting students to school building administration (64)
3. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (54)
4. Use of video surveillance (49)
5. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (38)
6. Assigned seating for grades or schools (37)
7. Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and expectations (34)

The top four behavior management strategies were obvious in their value points, while

the fifth, sixth, and seventh most important were within 4 value points.

Age Groups

The age category were divided into 5 groups: Age Group 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60,

and 60 +. Each group heading includes the number of acceptable response(s) returned based

upon completing the survey per instructions. The top behavior management strategies for bus

drivers based on age:

Age Group 21-30 (n=1)

1. Having an adult ride the bus to patrol the students (5)
2. Having an assigned peer to sit with certain students (4)
3. Rewarding students who are displaying the appropriate actions (3)
4. Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and expectations (2)
5. Taking a student who is disruptive on the bus back to the school (1)

Age Group 31-40 (n=1)

1. Assigned seating for grades or schools (5)
2. Assigning a student to a particular seat (4)
3. Designing your bus route to keep certain students on the shortest time period (3)
4. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (2)
5. Reporting students to school building administration (1)

Age Group 41-50 (n=13)

1. Use of video surveillance (32)
2. Assigning a student to a particular seat (28)
3. Reporting students to school building administration (26)
4. Assigned seating for grades or schools (18)
5. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (18)
   Reviewing school bus rules with the students (18)

Age Group 51-60 (n=16)

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (47)
2. Reporting students to school building administration (30)
3. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (26)
4. Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and expectations (20)
5. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (19)

Age Group 61 + (n=5)

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (14)
2. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (12)
3. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (9)
4. Reporting students to school building administration (7)
5. Allowing students to read (5)
   Having an adult ride the bus to patrol the students (5)
   Taking a student who is disruptive on the bus back to the school (5)
   Use of video surveillance (5)

Based upon the surveys returned and completed per instructions, the 36 surveys were

divided into five age groups. All age groups agreed that Assigning a Student to a Particular Seat

ranks in the top five behavior management strategies except for the 21-30 age group. All age

groups agreed that Reporting Students to School Building Administration ranks in the top five behavior management strategies except for the 21-30 age group. All age groups agreed that Moving a Student to a Particular Seat During the Bus Route ranks in the top five behavior management strategies except for the 21-30 age group. Only two age groups agreed that Use of Video Surveillance ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (41-50 and 61 +). Only two age groups agreed that Discussing a Student's Behavior with a Parent or Guardian ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (51-60 and 61 +). Only two age groups agreed that Assigned Seating for Grades or Schools ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (31-40 and 41-50). Only two age groups agreed that Talking to a Student Before the Bus Route Begins to Review the Rules and Expectations ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (21-30 and 51-60). There was only one bus driver who responded in the 21-30 age group and the 31-40 age group. Although no age group top five behavior management strategies were parallel to the ranking of all bus drivers, age group 61 + did have all top five behavior management strategies the same as the top five of all bus drivers.

Years of Experience

The years of experience category is divided into six groups: 0-3. 4-8, 9-15, 16-21, 22-29, and 30 +. Each group heading includes the number of acceptable response(s) returned based upon completing the survey per instructions. The top behavior management strategies for bus drivers based on years of experience driving a school bus:

<u>1-3</u>*Years of Experience (n=4)*

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (10)
2. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (8)
3. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (7)
4. Rewarding students who are displaying the appropriate actions (6)
5. Allowing students to use electronic devices (5)
   Having an adult ride the bus to patrol the students (5)
   Reporting students to school building administration

(5) <u>4-8</u>*Years of Experience (n=8)*

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (21)
2. Assigned seating for grades or schools (19)
3. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (16)
4. Use of video surveillance (10)
5. Reporting students to school building administration

(9) <u>9-15</u>*Years of Experience (n=10)*

1. Reporting students to school building administration (28)
2. Assigning a student to a particular seat (24)
3. Use of video surveillance (21)
4. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (15)
5. Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and
   expectations (12)

<u>16-21</u>*Years of Experience (n=10)*

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (23)
2. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (14)
3. Allowing students to read (12)
   Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and
   expectations (12)
   Use of video surveillance

(12) <u>22-29</u>*Years of Experience (n=1)*

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (5)
2. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (4)
3. Reporting students to school building administration (3)
4. Stopping the bus and go to the seat where a particular student sits and talk to that
   student (2)
5. Use of video surveillance (1)

1. Reporting students to school building administration (9)
2. Assigning a student to a particular seat (6)
2. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (6)
4. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (5)
   Reviewing school bus rules with the students (5)

Based upon the surveys returned and completed per instructions, the 36 surveys were divided into six groups in the years of experience category. All years of experience groups agreed that Assigning a Student to a Particular Seat ranks in the top five behavior management strategies. All years of experience groups agreed that Reporting Students to School Building Administration ranks in the top five behavior management strategies except for the 16-21 years of experience group. All years of experience groups agreed that Moving a Student to a Particular Seat During the Bus Route ranks in the top five behavior management strategies except for the 9-15 years of experience group. Four years of experience groups agreed that Use of Video Surveillance ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (4-8, 9-15, 16-21, and 22-29). Three years of experience groups agreed that Discussing a Student's Behavior with their Parent/Guardians ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (0-3, 9-15, and 30 +). Only one years of experience group agreed that Assigned Seating for Grades or Schools ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (4-8). Only two years of experience groups agreed that Talking to a Student Before the Bus Route Begins to Review the Rules and Expectations ranks in the top five behavior management strategies (9-15 and 16-21). The 22-29 years of experience group had only one returned response. Although no years of experience group top five behavior management strategies were parallel to the ranking of all bus drivers, there were five groups that had four of the top five behavior management strategies in their top

five rankings (0-3, 4-8, 9-15, 22-29, and 30 +).

Gender

  The gender category was divided into two groups: male and female. Each group

heading includes the number of acceptable response(s) returned based upon completing the

survey per instructions. The top behavior management strategies for bus drivers based on

gender:

Male (n=15)

    1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (46)
    2. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (28)
    3. Reporting students to school building administration (22)
    3. Use of video surveillance (22)
    5. Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and
       expectations (20)

Female (n=21)

    1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (47)
    2. Reporting students to school building administration (42)
    3. Assigned seating for grades or schools (29)
    4. Use of video surveillance (27)
    5. Moving a student to a particular during the bus route (26)

  Based upon the surveys returned and completed per instructions, the 36 surveys were

divided into two groups in the gender category. All gender groups agreed that Assigning a

Student to a Particular Seat ranks in the top five behavior management strategies, both ranking it

as the top behavior strategy. Both gender groups agreed that Reporting Students to School

Building Administration, Moving a Student to a Particular Seat During the Bus Route, and Use

of Video Surveillance ranks in the top five behavior management strategies. Neither gender

group agreed that Discussing a Student's Behavior with a Parent or Guardian ranks in the top

five behavior management strategies. The female gender group agreed that Assigned Seating for Grades or Schools ranks in the top five behavior management strategies while the male gender agreed that Talking to a Student Before the Bus Route Begins to Review the Rules and Expectations ranks in the top five behavior management strategies.

Employed by the School System in Another Position

The employed by the school system in another position category was divided into two groups: yes and no. Each group heading includes the number of acceptable response(s) returned based upon completing the survey per instructions. The top behavior management strategies for bus drivers based on if the bus driver is employed by the school system in another position:

Yes (n=16)

    1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (38)
    1 . Use of video surveillance (38)
    3. Reporting students to school building administration (30)
    4. Reviewing school bus rules with students (24)
    5. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (23)

No (n=20)

    1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (55)
    2. Reporting students to school building administration (34)
    3. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (31)
    4. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (30)
    5. Assigned seating for grades or schools (21)

Based upon the surveys returned and completed per instructions, the 36 surveys were divided into two groups in the employed by the school system in another position category. Both groups agreed that Assigning a Student to a Particular Seat ranks in the top five behavior management strategies, both at the top behavior strategy. Both groups agreed that Reporting

Students to School Building Administration and Moving a Student to a Particular Seat During the Bus Route ranks in the top five behavior management strategies. The Yes group agreed that Use of Video Surveillance ranks in the top five behavior management strategies as well as Reviewing School Bus Rules with Students. The No group agreed that Discussing a Student's Behavior with a Parent or Guardian and Assigned Seating for Grades or Schools ranks in the top five behavior management strategies. Both groups selected four of the top five behavior management strategies as the same as the overall top five behavior management strategies.

Research Question 5

What are the most common behavior management strategies recommended by school building administrators for bus drivers to use on school buses?

I interviewed 10 school building administrators to solicit their perspective for Research Question 5 as a qualitative element to this research study. The 10 school building administrators were selected based on the years of experience (minimum of 5 years of administration duties) and the type of school the administrator works at in the school system. Of the 10 responses, the responses and frequency of their perspective is listed below:

- Assigned seats (8)
- Review bus rules (explain expectations-counsel students) (5)
- Warning of discipline action/Referred to school principals (5)
- Parental contact (either bus drivers or administration) (4)
- Learn names (3)
- Greet students (3)
- Being consistent (3)
- Separate age groups (2)
- Strategies similar to teachers - in classrooms (2)
- Interact with students (1)
- Make sure camera is working (1)
- Keep lights on during morning route (1)

- Bus drivers be proactive (1)
- for discipline actions (1)

Each school building administrator responded to this research question differently. Of the responses, having assigned seats ranked the top behavior strategy they recommend, especially with the "trouble" or "problem" students, while only two administrators stated "separate age groups" or grade bands. Only three administrators mentioned being "consistent" as a recommendation of behavior strategy. While two administrators referenced school buses as comparison to classrooms or strategies "like teachers," it is noted both of these administrators are high school administrators. Also like a teacher, four administrators referred to "learn names" and "greet kids when they got on bus" and "interact with kids." While this may be considered minor, students will recognize adults who talk to them when calling out their name.

There were five administrators who gave a list of steps of disciplinary actions that students who are bus riders will follow if inappropriate behaviors continue on school buses. One of these administrators stated these steps are for "minor" behaviors and would skip to possible suspension depending on the behavior. These steps may be published in students' handbooks or on the wall of the office. The speed and flow these administrators stated these steps sounded as if these steps have been quoted to students and possible adults lately and maybe frequently.

Research Question 6

To what extent do school building administrators perceive the behavior of students on school buses impacts student behavior at school?

I interviewed 10 school building administrators to solicit their perspective for Research

Question 6 as a qualitative element to this research study. The 10 school building administrators were selected based on the years of experience (minimum of 5 years of administration duties) and the type of school the administrator works at in the school system. This research question is comprised of four interview questions.

To what extent, if any, do students who have behavioral issues on school buses tend to have similar issues at school?

The responses given by school building administrators varied. The high school administrators responded with similar remarks: "Similar," "85%," "majority of students with bus issues also have same issues at school," and "75%." Middle school administrators responded with "same students" and "up to 90%." Intermediate school administrators responded with "75%," "less than 20% of bus referrals do not have school referrals," and "not as much due to structure at school." Primary school administrator responded with "primary age children tend to exhibit behavioral compliance in unsupervised settings such as on a bus." K-8 school administrators responded with "similar" and "yes, same students." An administrator stated students have better behavior at school is because "teachers can sit and work with students" and "give them individual attention."

To what extent, if any, do students who have behavioral issues at school tend to have similar issues on school buses?

The responses given by school building administrators varied but were mostly similar to the responses given in the previous question. The high school administrators responded with "few," "mostly personality issues," and "if they are a bully at school, then they usually are on the bus." Middles school administrators responded with "up to 90% of the time." Intermediate

66

school administrators responded with "75%" and "same." Primary school administrator

responded with "sometimes" and "it varies from bus to bus." K-8 school administrators

responded with "similar," arguments with peers will carry over," "events happen before carry

over," and '90%."

How often do school bus behaviors carry over to school?

The responses given by school administrators were similar to the responses given in

previous questions but still varied with the administrators. High school administrators

responded with "not much - unless the kid is bullied or picked on in the same class," "fight on

the bus, have to watch at school," and "usually." Middle school administrators responded with

"if they have interaction at school." Intermediate school administrators responded with "50%"

and "if they have neighborhood issues." Primary school administrator responded with "only

occasionally." K-8 administrators responded with "not very often," "10%," and "typically the

same."

How often do school behaviors carry over to school buses?

The responses given by administrators varied by school but were similar to previous

responses. High school administrators responded with "almost the same" and "fight at school,

watch them on bus." Intermediate school administrators responded with "a predictor,

administrators give warning before student gets on bus and then not as often. We try to use

preventative measure." and "depends on the students." Primary school administrator responded

with "if it is addressed at school, it usually does not start up again." K-8 administrators

responded with "more on the buses" and "higher, up to 90%." One administrator added that

some of the behaviors at school begin when students are waiting in lines on school buses in the

afternoon.

<div align="center">Research Question 7</div>

What driver management practices seem most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on buses?

I interviewed 10 school building administrators to solicit their perspective for Research Question 7 as a qualitative element to this research study. The 10 school building administrators were selected based on the years of experience (minimum of 5 years of administration duties) and the type of school the administrator works at in the school system. Of the 10 responses, the responses and frequency of their perspective is listed below:

Most Conducive

- Having manners
- Be the adult and driver
- Know the parents
- Keep open communication
- Have rules
- Review rules
- Have assigned seats
- Knows de-escalation strategies (2)
- Personal-know names and students (2)
- Patient
- Consistent (5)
- Respect
- Be stern and firm but respect students
- Nice to students
- Calm
- Friendly
- Treat all students equally
- Firm (say what you mean and mean what you say)
- Same as teachers in the classrooms (2)
- Organized and structured
- Ability to talk with students

- Problem solving ability
- Proactive
- Professional relationships
- Be understanding
- Flexible
- Set plan and stay with it
- Enforce same rules on bus as classroom
- Same characteristics as in a

classroom Least Conducive

- Yelling
- Let things go until there is a big problem
- Beating down students
- Let students escalate/blow up
- Expect to get rich
- Not understanding you have to work with students
- Ignore problems
- Letting students continue to do what they want (Passive permission)
- Lose temper
- Hateful
- Real picky
- Pick favorites - those students boss others
- Sit wherever
- Too stern
- Too easy
- Like in a classroom, too friendly does not work
- Too hard nose
- Letting students do whatever
- Takes comments personally
- Impatient
- Quick temper
- Lax personality (Inconsistent)
- No assigned seats
- Allow food and drink on bus
- Tried to be buddies or friends
- Same characteristics as in a classroom
- Allowing students to eat on the bus
- Allowing students to change seats at stops

Some school building administrators expanded on their perspective of students riding

school buses and bus drivers. One administrator said the "bus is a strange mix of students."

Another administrator states the problems on school buses are because it contains "multi-age

groups (K-12)." Another administrator stated there were "more issues on buses due to mixed

ages" being on school buses. The older students uses language that the younger students should

not be hearing. This administrator also added behavior issues depend to some extent on how

many students are on the bus. Another administrator stated the condition of some school buses

being overcrowded leads to behavior issues of school buses. This administrator added school

buses have "long routes, especially in pm (afternoon)."

One administrator said the big rules for students to follow on school buses are staying in

seat, no hitting or kicking, using acceptable language, no throwing items on the bus or out of the

bus, and no trading items. He stated to "enforce same rules on bus as in classroom." An

administrator stated there should be a few simple routine (rules) and reinforce them. This

administrator stated bus drivers should establish procedures and enforce routines. The routines

this administrator suggested were how to enter and exit the bus, where and how to sit, and how

to talk to bus driver. An administrator added students should know riding school buses "is not a

vacation. It is getting from point A to point B."   Another comment is bus drivers play the radio

"which stirs things up with the kids." An administrator stated majority of students with bus

issues also have bad habits and have less than desirable home life.

An administrator added the school system transportation department should be proactive

instead of waiting to address problems on school buses. This administrator said bus drivers need

better support from the transportation department. An administrator added the transportation

department needs to be more consistent and hands-on with bus safety. Another comment from

an administrator is school buses "need to have an assistant on it. It is not safe but the cost of it is too much."

One administrator added that bus drivers need parental support. An administrator commented that parents need to know that "riding a bus is a privilege." There were three administrators who mentioned suspension from riding the bus due to behavior issues, and they also mentioned contacting parents before any suspension occurs.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 describes responses bus drivers submitted in the surveys they completed and the perspectives school building administrators gave during the interviews. Of 96 bus drivers who received surveys, 40 surveys were returned completed. Of 14 school building administrators contacted, 10 administrators agreed and were interviewed.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was first to determine the satisfaction level of bus drivers pertaining to school building administration, transportation department, and student behaviors, and second to identify the common behavior management strategies used by bus driver in a particular school system in east Tennessee. I also compared the common behavior management strategies used by school bus drivers who are also employed by the school system in some position in addition to this vocation, in particular in a school building, with school bus drivers who are not employed by the school system other than driving the school bus. I also interviewed school building administration in the same east Tennessee school system for their perspective on student behavior management strategies recommended for bus drivers to use on school buses and also their perspective on the impact student behavior on a school bus has on a student at school. I also solicited responses from school building administrators of their perspective of driver management practices they observe to be most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on buses.

<u>Summary</u>

Research Questions 1-4 were the quantitative element of this study. Research Questions 1-3 were based on responses given by bus drivers to a survey. The bus drivers rated questions with a 1-5 ranking, with 1 being extremely dissatisfied to 5 being extremely satisfied, with 3 being neutral. Research Question 4 was based on responses given by bus drivers in a survey.

Bus drivers ranked in order their top five behavior management strategies they use on their

school buses. Research Questions 5-7 were the qualitative element of this study. Research

Questions 5-7 were based on the responses given by school building administrators in an

interview.

Research Question 1

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with school building

administration?

Using a single sample t-test, the results indicate the bus drivers are satisfied with the

school building administration. Of five items on the survey the bus drivers responded to for

Research Question 1, bus drivers had the lowest degree of satisfaction for School Building

Administration in Terms of being Fair with the Discipline of Students who Violated School Bus

rules and the highest degree of satisfaction for Communication to School Administrators

Concerning Student Behaviors.

Research Question 2

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with the transportation

department?

Using a single sample t-test, the results indicate the bus drivers are satisfied with the

transportation department. Of nine items on the survey the bus drivers responded to for

Research Question 2, bus drivers had the lowest degree of satisfaction for The Amount of

Training you Receive on Behavior Management and the highest degree of satisfaction for

Communicating with the Transportation Department via Two-way Radio.

Research Question 3

To what extent are bus drivers satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior?

Using a single sample t-test, the results indicate the bus drivers are neither satisfied or dissatisfied with student behavior. Of six items on the survey the bus drivers responded to for Research Question 3, bus drivers had the lowest degree of satisfaction for Parental Support of Enforcing Bus Rules and Level of Distractions from the Students During the Bus Route and the highest degree of satisfaction for Student Remaining Seated During the Bus Route.

Research Question 4

What are the five most important behavior management strategies used by bus drivers?

Using a frequency table, the top five behavior management strategies were:

1. Assigning a student to a particular seat (93)
2. Reporting students to school building administration (64)
3. Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route (54)
4. Use of video surveillance (49)
5. Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian (38)

    The next two highest were close to the fifth highest:
6. Assigned seating for grades or schools (37)
7. Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and expectations (34)

This Research Question was broken into categories that based upon age, years of experience, gender, and employed by the school system in some other occupation. With a few exceptions, the top five behavior management strategies in each category reflected the top seven

overall behavior management strategies.

Age

There were five groups represented in this study. Age group 21-30 and age group 31-40 both had only one response, 2.5% of the total in each category. Age group 41-50 had 14 responses, 35% of the total. Age group 51-60 had 16 responses, 40% of the total. Age group 61+ had eight responses, 20% of the total.

This category may not represent the total population of bus drivers in the age groups 21-30 and 31-40 due to one bus driver responding in each group. These two groups represent just a single perspective of behavior management strategies. The responses in the three other groups, age groups 41-50, 51-60, and 61+, indicate these bus drivers were at least at 80% similar to all bus drivers in the behavior management strategies they use on school buses.

Years of Experience

There were six groups represented in this study. Bus drivers having 0-3 years of experience had four responses, 10% of the total. Bus drivers having 4-8 years of experience had nine responses, 22.5% of the total. Bus drivers having 9-15 years of experience had 11 responses, 27.5% of the total. Bus drivers having 16-21 years of experience had 10 responses, 25% of the total. Bus drivers having 22-29 years of experience had one response, 2.5% of the total. Bus drivers having 30+ years of experience had five responses, 12.5% of the total.

This category was divided into six groups that resulted in smaller populations in each group. Bus drivers having 22-29 years of experience had only one response that represent a

single perspective of behavior management strategies. All groups had varying responses in this category. The response of Rewarding Students who are Displaying the Appropriate Actions was only selected by one group, the 0-3 years of experience group. This may indicate that newer bus drivers are optimistic about students and as bus drivers have more experience they believe students displaying appropriate actions should be the standard.

Gender

There were two groups represented in this study. Males had 18 responses, 45% of the total. Females had 22 responses, 55% of the total.

The males had two equal amount of responses: Reporting Students to School Building Administration and Use of Video Surveillance. The males selected Talking to a Student Before the Bus Route Begins to Review the Rules and Expectations as the fifth selection that may be considered being proactive and not reactive in bus management strategies. The females selected Assigned Seating for Grades or Schools that may be considered proactive due to knowing the grades or schools that may need to be closer to the front. The other proactive strategies both male and female bus drivers selected were the Use of Surveillance and Assigning Students to a Particular Seat.

Employed by School System in Another Position

There were two groups represented in this study. Yes had 16 responses, 40% of the total. No had 24 responses, 60% of the total.

The two groups selected three of the five responses the same. The differences were the

bus drivers who are employed by the school system in another position selected the Use of

Video Surveillance and Reviewing School Bus Rules with Students, whereas the bus drivers

who are not employed by the school system in another position selected Discussing a Student's

Behavior with a Parent or Guardian and Assigned Seating for Grades or Schools. The difference

may be the bus drivers employed by the school system in another position may be considered

more proactive than the other group.

<center>Research Question 5</center>

What are the most common behavior management strategies recommended by school

building administrators for bus drivers to use on school buses?

The school building administrators gave their recommendations for behavior

management strategies bus drivers should use on school buses. Although administrators did

not have one strategy in common, most administrators agreed that assigning seats should be

used in some form, either a group of students or an individual. The next most recommended

behavior management strategies were review bus rules, which could be done before the bus

route begins as a preventative measure or during the bus route as a reminder of the expectations

of being a bus rider, and warning students of discipline action or referring to school principals.

The administrators added parental contact be made as a behavior strategy. One administrator

stated parents usually get more involved in disciplining their children when they have to drive to

school to drop off and pick up their child. A personal recommendation is to learn names and

greet students. One administrator said the long-term effect of knowing students is that students

do not want to disappoint adults who know them and recognize them on some level other than

<center>77</center>

being a bus rider.

Research Question 6

To what extent do school building administrators perceive the behavior of students on school buses impacts student behavior at school?

This research question was made up of four questions given to administrators. The responses varied from a numerical value to situational instances. Almost all administrators stated there is a core of students in their schools who have behavior issues regardless if they are in a classroom, in the hallway, or in the school bus. Most administrators agree that student behavior on school buses can have an influence on the behavior at school if the situation does not change. Administrators stated students who are picked on during the morning bus route can be affected at school if those same students are in the same grade or class. Administrators stated they believe some of the behavior issues students have on school buses are related to having different age groups on school buses. Although this would not solve all behavior issues, having school buses with grades separated from each other may reduce behavior issues on school buses.

Research Question 7

What driver management practices seem most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on buses?

Each administrator had a list of driver management practices that included both most and least conducive to managing and preventing behaviors on school buses. The characteristic most stated by administrators to be most conducive was being consistent. After stating their list, some administrators summarized their list by commenting that management practices should be similar to those used by a teacher in a classroom. Although the list for the least

conducive characteristic of bus drivers was long, there was not one particular characteristic that was repeated by most administrators. Administrators give their personal input to this list and it appeared to have been due to the school bus behavior issues they have addressed at their schools.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

This study has been unique due to the population of the main emphasis: bus drivers. Although they are rarely seen in the school building, they do have an impact on the behaviors of students who ride school buses. Bus drivers can make going to school more enjoyable to students or more dreadful. Also, bus drivers can help students turn an awful day at school into a pleasant ending or vice versa. This study has been interesting due to the varying viewpoints given by bus drivers and administrators.

The bus drivers have a degree of satisfaction with school building administration. This degree of satisfaction is separated from a degree of neither satisfaction or dissatisfaction by a slim margin. This could be best represented with the satisfaction level of bus drivers pertaining to School Building Administration of Being Fair with the Discipline of Students who Violated School Bus Rules. It might be the belief of some bus drivers that some school building administrators are not consistent in this area.

The bus drivers have a degree of satisfaction with the transportation department. The strongest satisfaction level of bus drivers is Communicating with the Transportation Department via Two-way Radio. This is better than Communicating via Telephone.

The bus drivers have a degree of neither satisfaction or dissatisfaction with student

behavior. The highest level of satisfaction from bus drivers is Students Remaining Seated During the Bus Route. However, all responses in this six inquiry category were close to each other with the Level of Distractions and Parental Support of Enforcing Bus Rules being the lowest. This could be the result of participating in the survey at the end of day, after the afternoon bus route, or towards the end of the school year.

School building administrators stated this study was distinctive and would be very interesting. School building administrators were very cooperative during the interviews. Most of them treated bus drivers as school personnel and wanted to improve the quality of enjoyment of bus drivers by improving student behavior. All school building administrators interviewed have some type of contact with bus drivers almost daily. They give suggestions to bus drivers on how to deal with behavior issues and try to be more proactive, as they suggest bus drivers do on school buses. Administrators have to work with bus drivers to solve bus behavior issues, so it is in the best interest of administrators and bus drivers to have a plan of dealing with behavior issues and sticking with it. Some administrators stated they had a four-step plan of dealing with bus behavior issues: 1) move a student to the front of the school bus, 2) counsel student on expectations and rules of the school bus, 3) communicate with parent of behavior issues and possible consequences and try to gain support, and 4) suspension from riding school bus. Bus drivers are on a time restriction when they unload students at a school and need to communicate quickly and effective when dealing with bus behavior issues.

<u>Recommendations for Practice</u>

This study has dealt with bus drivers' relationships and satisfaction level with school

80

building administration, transportation department, and students. It included the perspective of

school building administrators in three areas: behavior management strategies they recommend

to use on school buses, student behaviors at school and on the school bus, and their perspective

of driver management practices that seem most and least conducive to managing and preventing

behaviors on buses. Through the surveys collected from school bus drivers and administrators

interviewed, I made some discoveries that may be used in further practices:

- Administrators have the responsibility of dispensing consequences to all students

  who have unacceptable behaviors, including students who are riding school

  buses. Bus drivers have the duty to communicate to administrators students who

  have unacceptable behaviors on school buses. Although oral communication may

  work for most situations, a new communication tool should be implemented.

  This hand-written communication tool should be for both administrators and bus

  drivers to discuss student behaviors at school, on school bus, and any other

  imperative information. This tool should have a certain time limit for

  administrators to deal with reported behavior issue and the disciplinary action

  taken concerning any school bus behavior issue. Both administrators and bus

  drivers should have a copy to keep for records.

- Improving and increasing training for bus drivers on behavior management on

  school buses. Of the 40 surveys returned, 3 surveys did not answer the inquiry:

  Would you be willing to attend meetings with the sole purpose of learning

  strategies in improving student's behaviors on the bus? Of the 37 surveys marked

  for this inquiry, 30 marked 'yes; and 7 marked 'no,' 81% yes and 19% no. The

inquiry that was the lowest under the transportation department was: The amount of training you receive on behavior management, which was below neutral. Bus drivers would benefit from more training on behavior management.

- Add more information on student behavior management including links to the school system's website. This will allow bus drivers to research information at their own pace and in their own privacy that will improve their skills of dealing with student behavior without going to meetings.

- Improve student behavior on school buses using multiple approaches. Soliciting parental support is one strategy available for the schools and bus drivers. Being more proactive by initially including parents instead of waiting until there may be suspensions would benefit the schools, students, and families. Also decreasing the level of distraction on school buses would benefit everyone. Bus drivers have a complicated time just driving school buses safely and when distractions from students on school buses occur the risk multiplies. Enlisting student support may improve student behavior on school buses. The students on school buses may improve their own behavior when they realize they could be endangering the lives of their selves and others when they have distracting behaviors or when they realize personnel will listen to their suggestions. Students should have the opportunity to let their opinions be known on school bus conditions. The students' suggestions on school bus conditions may improve student behavior on school buses. Bus drivers should have the authority to select students to assist in managing student behaviors on school buses.

- Although not listed in the top five behavior management strategies used by bus drivers, communicate with the school board and transportation department, the possibilities of having an adult ride a school bus as an extra set of eyes on the school bus. Discuss the legal ramifications if schools solicit volunteers for these positions.

- Include the school bus rules and expectations in notebook or agenda given to students and parents at the beginning of each school year. Both students and parents should sign commitments to follow school bus rules and expectations, and failure to do so will result disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. This list of school bus rules and expectations should be posted on the school's website as well as the county's website.

- Have a uniform disciplinary action, similar to the dress code, for all schools,.

- Have all schools collect and enter school bus referrals into a centralized system so all schools would be consistent and information would transfer to the transportation department. These data can assist directors in recognizing excessive referrals that may be due to lack of driver training, overloaded buses, or long bus routes. This information would not contain students' names but the type of referrals and number of incidents.

- Have all schools practice with all students the correct method of entering and exiting school buses. Have all students demonstrate the proper behaviors when on school buses. This should be conducted at the beginning of the school year and after any extended periods of time off, i.e. Christmas break. Students who

have behavior referrals to schools from bus drivers should be required to attend school bus meetings during their free time, i.e. recess, to display proper behavior and ensure routines are established.

Recommendations for Further Research

- Bus drivers and gender. Bus drivers, both males and females, have the same responsibilities and duties. Research on how male bus drivers and female bus drivers deal with student behavior and how students respond and interact to either gender may indicate student behavior and interaction is biased. Little research has been published pertaining to this subject. I recommend for further research on bus drivers and how each gender affects students and how students respond and are respectful to each gender.

- Performance, evaluation, and compensation. Compensation was not mentioned with satisfaction in the literature review. Bus drivers usually work a few hours per day driving school buses. Just by the amount of time they spend daily, it would appear they are compensated fairly. However, due to the enormous responsibility of transporting students safely, it would appear they are not compensated enough. I recommend for further research on bus drivers and how they are compensated with time spent preparing their bus for transporting students, time spent actually transporting students to and from schools, and time spent away from the job of driving to any other vocation they have to supplement their income. I also recommend to develop a performance evaluation for bus

drivers and investigate possible connection of performance to compensation or bonus.

- Degree of satisfaction level of student behavior at the beginning of the school year. This study was conducted at the end of the school year. This is usually the time when it is getting hotter and the students are not in structured environments at schools due to field trips, extracurricular activities, and end of school year activities. I recommend for further research on the degree of satisfaction level of bus drivers at a different time of the year, maybe in October, in the area of student behavior.

- Uniforms. I did not find any literature on the importance, if any, of bus drivers wearing uniforms. Uniforms are worn by police officers and they have respect, if not for them personally, then for the position they have and with the authority they have. I recommend for further research the level of respect and response students give to bus drivers if bus drivers wear uniforms.

- Parental support. Little literature is provided pertaining parental support in the area of school buses. Educators realize the importance of parental support and seek the support of parents when dealing with students who have behavior issues. I recommend for further research how to involve parental units in the support of bus safety and responding to bus drivers.

- Various grade groups on school buses. Although this school system has students of all grades ride school buses at the same time, it may improve students' behavior if all grades did not ride at the same time. I recommend for further

research the effects of various grade groups riding school buses at the same time with student behaviors and compare it to the effects of close proximity grade groups (K-2 and 3-5 or 6-8 and 9-12) riding school buses at the same time with student behaviors.

- Potential bus drivers. Although not required in this school system, testing potential bus drivers on their disposition on working with and communicating with students may improve the selection of bus drivers and improve student behavior on school buses. I recommend studying potential character or personality tests that would discover potential bus drivers' disposition in the area of students and their potential relationship.

REFERENCES

Atkinson, C. (2009). Strategies for discipline problems on the school bus. *School Bus Fleet*. Retrieved from http://www.schoolbusfleet.com/Channel/School-Bus-Safety/Articles/2009/09/Strategies-for-Discipline-Problems-on-the-School-Bus.aspx

Astor, R., Guerra, N., & Acker, R. (2010). How can we improve school safety research? *Educational Researcher*. 39(1), 69-78. Retrieved from http://edr.sagepub.com/content/39/1/69

Baxter, P. (2005). History of NCST. 16th National Congress on School Transportation. Retrieved from http://ncstonline.org

Board Policy BP253 (2011). Sevier County Board of Education. *Bus driver safety.* Retrieved from http://www.sevier.org/board/boardpolicies/BP253.pdf

Board Policy BP632 (2007). Sevier County Board of Education. *Student behavior code.* Retrieved from http://www.sevier.org/board/boardpolicies/BP632.pdf

Board Policy BP610 (n.d.). Sevier County Board of Education. *Bus conduct.* Retrieved from http://www.sevier.org/board/boardpolicies/BP610.pdf

Bully. (n.d.) In Merriam-Webster Dictionary online. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bully

Button, C. (1988) The importance of a good transportation/pupil safety instruction program. *School Business Affairs*. 54(4), 28-30

Button, C. (1984) Administrative support is essential to a good transportation program. *School Business Affairs*. 50(4), 22 & 52

Campbell, D., Adams, R., & Ryabik, J. (1974) Group-contingent time-out and behavior on a school bus. *Psychological Reports*, 34, 883-885.

Carns, A. (1996). School bus safety: A peer helper program with a career development focus. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*. 30(3), 213-217.

Commercial Driver License Manual (2011). Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland

Security. Retrieved from http://www.tn.gov/safety/publications/CDLManual11.pdf

Commercial Driver's License Program (n.d.). U.S. Department of Transportation. Federal
    Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Retrieved
    from http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration-licensing/cdl/cdl.htm

Communication, (n.d.). In Merriam-Webster Dictionary online. Retrieved
    from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/communication

Dawson, J., & Sanders, D. (1997). A bus program that really works! *Principal*. 76(3), 38-39.

Department of Safety & Homeland Security. (n.d.). CVE pupil transportation. Retrieved
    from http://www.tn.gov/safety/CVE/pupil transport.shtml

Dillon, J. (2001). Keeping peace on the school bus. *Principal*. 81(2), 39.

Douglas, D. (1986) *Pupil transportation manual*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada:
    EduServ.

Farmer, E. (1975). *Pupil transportation: The essentials of program service*.
    Danville, IL: Interstate.

Farmer, E. (1984). Current issues in pupil transportation. *School Business Affairs*, 50(4), 20-
    21.

Farmer, E. (1987). Functional bus driver-pupil passenger relationships. *School Business
    Affairs*. 53(4), 30.

Farmer, E. (1989). The driving force. *School Transportation*. 176(11), 4-6.

Harrison, M. (2005). Bully on the bus. *Teaching Tolerance.* Retrieved
    from http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-28-fall-
    2005/feature/bully-bus

Historyof school bus safety - Why are school buses built as they are? (2000). National
    Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. Retrieved
    from http://www.nasdpts.org/Documents/Paper-SchoolBusHistory.pdf

Keenan, C. H., Edison, J. L., Farmer, E., Shew, B., & Gallego, J. (2006).
    History of southeastern states pupil transportation conference. Retrieved from

http://www.sesptc.com/Southeastern%20States%20Conference%20History%20(2).pdf

Kite, P. , Williford, A., Cooley, J., DePaolis, K., Rubens, S., & Vernberg, E. (2013). Patterns of victimization locations in elementary school children: Effects of grade level and gender. *Child Youth Care Forum*. 42, 585-597. DOI: 10.1007/s10566-013-9219-9

Kravas, C., & Kravas, K. (1977) One to copy. This school board's training program for bus drivers really worked. *The American School Board Journal*. 164(11), 44.

Lieberman, R. (2002). Bullying: A slow fuse to childhood rage. National Association of School Psychologists. Retrieved from http://www.nasponline.org/press/bullying.pdf

Managing student behavior on the school bus: A key to bus safety (2007). *American Federation of Teachers*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://login.ezproxy.etsu.edu:3443/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/860 370079?accountid=10771

Mawdsley, R. (1996). *Pupil transportation and the law*. Topeka, KS: National Organization on Legal Problems of Education.

McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Meraviglia, M., Becker, H., Rosenbluth, B., Sanchez. E., & Robertson, T. (2003). The expect respect project: Creating a positive elementary school climate. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 18, 1347-1360. DOI: 10.1177/0886260503257457

Miller, A. (1988). *Pupil transportation management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Ramsburg and Roth.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (1989). *Improving school bus safety*. Washington, DC: Transportation Research Board.

Neatrour, P. (1994) Riding by the rules: A practical approach to bus discipline. *Schools in the Middle*. 4(1), 25-27.

Planning Glossary. (2012). Federal Highway Administration. Retrieved from http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/glossary/glossary_listing.cfm?TitleStart=S

Reading and riding keep students quiet and happy. (2004). *American Teacher*. 88(5), 10.

Rosen, L. (1997). School discipline: Best practices for administrators.
Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. Retrieved
from https://login.ezproxy.etsu.edu:3443/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.
aspx? direct=true&db=cat00643a&AN=newlib.bl347031&site=eds-live&scope=site

School bus drivers -- Their importance and training (2000). *National Association of State
Directors of Pupil Transportation Services*. Retrieved
from http://www.nasdpts.org/Documents/Paper-Drivers2000.pdf

School transportation safety data. (2012). Retrieved
from http://stnonline.com/resources/safety/school-bus-
safety-data

Sevier County School. (2012) Employment: Applying to become a bus driver. Retrieved
from http://www.sevier.org/busdrivers.html

Smith, P. (1972). Pupil transportation: A brief history. *Inequality in education*. 11(11), 6-21).

Tennessee Department of Education. (1994). *A manual for school administrators in pupil
transportation*. Nashville, TN: Department of Education.

Tennessee State Board of Education. (2005). Rules of the state board of education: Chapter
0520-1-5 pupil transportation, (5-b) Retrieved
from http://tennessee.gov/sos/rules/0520/0520-01/0520-01-05.pdf

Trotter, A. (1987). For safety and sanity's sake, help bus drivers keep peace on the ride to
school. *The American School Board Journal*. 174(11), 46-48.

Vail, K. (1996). Can we prevent school bus accidents?. *Educational Digest*. Vol. 61, 58-61.
Retrieved
from http://ehis.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.etsu.edu:2048/ehost/detail?sid=973fb647-
8878- 44a5-b2a3-
c230dcad6e1a%40sessionmgr111&vid=1&hid=105&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3Qtb
G l2ZQ%3d%3d#db=eft&AN=503399862

Vail, K. (1997). Unruly cargo. *The American School Board Journal*. 184(11), 34-36.

ETSU

East Tennessee State University
Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee
37614-1707 Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Initial Exempt

May 5, 2014
Brian Sims
3020 Amanda Drive
Kodak, TN 37764

RE: Driving and Thriving: Bus Drivers and the Behavior Strategies they use on their

buses
IRB#: c0414.11e
ORSPA#: n/a

•

On **May 5, 2014**, an exempt approval was granted in accordance with 45 CFR 46. 101(b)(2). It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Policies. No continuing review is required. The exempt approval will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

xform New Protocol Submission; Site Permission; Consent Letter to Bus Drivers; Consent Letter to Administrators; Phone Script for Administrators; Survey Questions; Interview Questions; Interview Guide; References; CV

Projects involving Mountain States Health Alliance must also be approved by MSHA following IRB approval prior to initiating the study.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Accredited Since December 2005

Proposed changes in approved research cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 109 (www.etsu.edu/irb). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject's continued welfare.

Sincerely,
Chris Ayres, Chair
ETSU Campus IRB

Cc:

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

Permission to conduct research for dissertation

Brian Sims <briansims@sevier.org>   Thu, Apr 3, 2014 at 1:06 PM

To: Debra Cline <debracline@sevier.org>

Dr. Cline,

Hello! I am a special education teacher at Seymour High School. I am also seeking a Doctor of Education degree at ETSU in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis department. I am in the dissertation stage of my degree and am seeking permission to conduct research in the Sevier County School System. The titled of my dissertation is "Driving and Thriving: Bus Drivers and the Behavior Management Strategies They Use." I am conducting both quantitative and qualitative research for my dissertation. For the quantitative aspect, every bus driver who drives a regular size bus and has a scheduled route will receive a survey to complete at their convenience. They are asked to list the top five behavior management strategies they use on their school buses. The survey also has questions pertaining to their satisfaction in three areas: student behavior, transportation department, and school building administration. For the qualitative aspect, I will be interviewing selected building administrators and ask their perspective of management practices of bus drivers, student behaviors at school and on school buses, and their recommendations of behavior management strategies on school buses.

I am requesting permission to conduct research for this dissertation from the Sevier County Board of Education. All participants will be voluntary and will remain anonymous. Thank you for your consideration, cooperation, and response.

Sincerely,

Brian Sims, Ed. S.

Special Education

Seymour High School

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

Debra Cline <debracline@sevier.org>   Thu, Apr 3, 2014 at 1:49 PM

To: Brian Sims <briansims@sevier.org>

Cc: Jim Keener <jimkeener@sevier.org>, Sandy Enloe <sandyenloe@sevier.org>, Debra Cline <debracline@sevier.org>

I have no objections to your surveys and interviews as long as both are done on a voluntary basis and that is made clear in your communication processes with drivers and administrators. I also expect that individuals, schools, and the school system will remain anonymous in the reporting of your results.

Sincerely,

Debra Cline

Debra Ann Cline, Ed.D

Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction
Sevier County School System

226 Cedar Street
Sevierville,   Tennessee
37862   865-453-4671 (Office
Phone)   865-774-4562 (C&I
Fax)

There are many truths of which the full meaning cannot be realized until personal experience has brought it home.

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO BUS DRIVERS

Dear Bus Driver,

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN. I am pursuing a Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis department. I am currently writing my dissertation titled "Driving and Thriving: Bus Drivers and the Behavior Management Strategies They Use." The purpose of this study is to explore the behavior management strategies school bus drivers use on their buses and to examine the satisfaction bus drivers have in different areas. Additionally, this study will explore the perspective of school administrators on: student behaviors, behavior management strategies recommended to use on school buses, and management practices of bus drivers that impact students' behavior on school buses.

I am requesting your participation in this research study by completing and returning the attached anonymous survey.   I have included a pre-addressed stamped envelope so you can mail your completed survey to me.   I am asking that you mail in the survey within one week from the time you receive it.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and anonymous, and your answers cannot be linked back to you. My contact information is below if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

Brian Sims

briansims@sevier.org

865-599-6788

APPENDIX E

SUVERY OF BUS DRIVERS

Please circle the correct responses:

1. What is your age group?

    21 - 30   31 - 40   41 - 50   51 - 60   61+

2. How many years have you been driving a school bus?

    0-3   4-8   9-15   16-21   22-29   30+

3. How many years have you been driving in this school system?

    0-3   4-8   9-15   16-21   22-29   30+

4. How many years have you been driving your current bus route?

    0-3   4-8   9-15   16-21   22-29   30+

5. Select one: Male   Female

6. Are you employed in the school system in addition to being a bus driver?

    Yes   No

    If "Yes" please select your position in the school system:

    Teacher   Teacher's Assistant   Custodian   Administration Cafeteria
    Maintenance Bus Garage   Other: _____

    How many years have you been in that position?

    0-3   4-8   9-15   16-21   22-29   30+

7. Would you be willing to attend meetings with the sole purpose of learning strategies to improving student's behavior on the bus?

    Yes   No

8. How many students are on your school bus during an average morning route?
    0-20   21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61-70   70+

9. How many students are on your school bus during an average afternoon route?

0-20   21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61-70   70+

10. How many schools do you transport students either to or from?

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

11. What group of students do you believe is the hardest to exhibit acceptable behaviors on your school bus?

   K-2   3-5   6-8   9-12

To what degree are you satisfied with each of the following? Respond according to the extent you agree or disagree. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

   12.   Communication from school administrators concerning student behaviors.

            SD   D   N   A   SA

   13.   Communication to school administrators concerning student behaviors.

            SD   D   N   A   SA

   14.   School building administration in terms of the amount of time it takes to solve behavior issues on the school bus.

            SD   D   N   A   SA

   15.   School building administration in terms of being fair with the discipline of students who violated school bus rules.

            SD   D   N   A   SA

   16.   School building administration in terms of being consistent with students of enforcement who broke school bus rules.

            SD   D   N   A   SA

   17.   Communicating with the transportation department via two-way radio.

            SD   D   N   A   SA

   18.   Communicating with the transportation department via telephone.

SD   D   N   A   SA

19.   Transportation department when attempting to communicate a problem.

SD   D   N   A   SA

20.   Support you receive from the transportation department on the maintenance of the school bus.

SD   D   N   A   SA

21.   Response time from the transportation department concerning a problem of a drop-off/pickup location on your bus route.

SD   D   N   A   SA

22.   Video recording on the school bus.

SD   D   N   A   SA

23.   The amount of training you receive on behavior management.

SD   D   N   A   SA

24.   Transportation department's website with information and links pertaining to student behavior management.

SD   D   N   A   SA

25.   The amount of training to operate a school bus from the transportation department.

SD   D   N   A   SA

26.   Students remaining seated during the bus route.

SD   D   N   A   SA

27.   Students saying only acceptable words during the bus route. SD

 D   N   A   SA

28.   Students keeping hands to themselves.

SD   D   N   A   SA

29.   Students obeying the bus rules.

   SD   D   N   A   SA

30.   Parental support of enforcing bus rules.

   SD   D   N   A   SA

31.   Level of distractions from the students during the bus route.

   SD   D   N   A   SA

32. The following is a list to behavior management strategies that may be used on your school bus. Please list the top five behavior management strategies you use during your bus route. Please mark the order of importance of the behavior management strategies of the top five behavior management strategies you use on the bus (Mark 1 as the most important to 5 as the 5th most important). We need only the top five most important, even if you use more than five. Thank you.

_____   Allowing students to read

_____   Allowing students to use electronic devices

_____   Assigned seating for grades or schools

_____   Assigning a student to a particular seat

_____   Calling the school during the bus route to discuss a particular student

_____   Designing your bus route to keep certain students on the shortest time period

_____   Discussing a student's behavior with a parent or guardian

_____   Having an adult ride the bus to patrol the students

_____   Having an assigned peer to sit with certain students

_____   Moving a student to a particular seat during the bus route

_____   Posting school bus rules on the school bus

_____   Reporting students to school building administration

_____   Reviewing school bus rules with the students

_____   Rewarding students who are displaying the appropriate actions

_____   Stopping the bus and go to the seat where a particular student sits and talk to that student

_____   Talking to a student before the bus route begins to review the rules and expectations

_____   Taking a student who is disruptive on the bus back to the school

_____   Use of video surveillance

Thank you for taking your time and giving your input to this survey. Thank you for being honest with your responses. The responses you gave will always be confidential and anonymous. As a fellow bus driver, I realize the stress of driving a school bus and this survey is an expression of what happens on school buses daily.

With sincere thanks,

Brian Sims

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Dear School Administrator,

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN. I am pursuing a Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis department. I am currently writing my dissertation titled "Driving and Thriving: Bus Drivers and the Behavior Management Strategies They Use." The purpose of this study is to explore the behavior management strategies school bus drivers use on their buses and to examine the satisfaction bus drivers have in different areas. Additionally, this study will explore the perspective of school administrators on: student behaviors, behavior management strategies recommended to use on school buses, and management practices of bus drivers that impact students' behavior on school buses.

I am requesting your participation for part of the research of this study.   I will ask 7 interview questions and will write your responses and read them back to you for accuracy. I will not record any identifying information, and your name will not be used in any form.   By participating in this study, you will be giving me permission to quote you (anonymously) and to use your input as data in this study. The responses you supply may be published in this dissertation, but will not be linked to you.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. If you agree to participate and proceed with the interview, you may withdraw your responses after the interview if you decide you do not want to participate at that time. My contact information is below if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

Brian Sims, Ed. S.
Seymour High School
Special Education Teacher

briansims@sevier.org

865-599-6788

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. What are the most common behavior management strategies recommended by school building administrators for bus drivers to use on school buses?

2. To what extent, if any, do students who have behavioral issues on school buses tend to have similar issues at school?

3. To what extent, if any, do students who have behavioral issues at school tend to have similar issues on school buses?

4. How often do school bus behaviors carry over to school?

5. How often do school behaviors carry over to school buses?

6. What driver management practices seem most conducive to managing/preventing behaviors on buses?

7. What driver management practices seem least conducive to managing/preventing behaviors on buses?

VITA

BRIAN KEITH SIMS

Education:	Public Schools, Sevierville, TN
	B.S. Special Education, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN 2005
	M.S. Elementary Education, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, 2007
	Ed.S. Administration & Supervision, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, TN 2008
	Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2014
Professional Experience:	Special Education Teacher, Sevier County School System, Sevierville, TN 2005 - Present